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OVER THE BAR.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Hoarse on the brooding stillness—
  The pause we feel and hear,
Like the hush of Nature's warning,
  When the holy Night draws near—
Beats a muffled roar of traffic,
  A thunder of hoof and wheel,
Through which the mellow minor chords
  Of human voices steal;
Far over the twinkling reefs and shoals,
  Wrapt low in the dying Day,
Past the drowsy star on the harbor bar,
  And on to the tumbling gray
Of the limitless lonely waters,
  And the Night's infinity,
Wander the Babel echoes
  Of the city beside the sea.

I rock with the rocking billow,
  Far out on the tide afloat,
And the cool white arms of the sea unfold,
  And girdle my little boat;
With treacherous lips she kisses
  The listless hand I lay
On her emerald braided tresses,
  Shot through with the gold of Day—
Shot through with the golden arrows
  That fell from the sinking sun,
When the dim West glowed in her god's embrace,
  And their tryst, like a dream, was done.

And so the sad Day leaves me,
  Adrift on the tide afar,
And the beautiful Night hath found me
  Where I rock on the moaning bar,
And leaning out of her silver doors,
  Smiles down in a kindling star.

I float with the idle seaweed,
  A waif of the wandering sea,
Alone in the waste of waters
  And the Night's infinity,
Till the World, with its griefs and clamor,
  Drops low in the mist a-lee.

THE GRANADAN DUEL;

OR, THE

Castilian and the Moor.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

CHAPTER X.

ONCE MORE IN THE FOREST.

The morning dawned clear and fair, and by the time the first beams of the rising sun had gilded the tops of the forest-trees Sir Manfred del Alcala was at the appointed spot in the retired valley of the Darro. He had come earlier than was necessary—earlier than had pleased his esquire,—but he was eager to convince his companions—perhaps, to convince himself—that his full strength and vigor had returned to him. And as he stepped upon the sward, swinging a light stick in his hand, he looked the picture of health and manly energy. There was a delicacy in the color of his cheek not usual to him, but this was only the loss of sunburn from his long confinement, and not from lack of blood.

Sir Guy had not hurried himself. In fact, he was behind time. He had overslept himself, and came upon the ground looking worn and weary. His appearance was in strong contrast with that of Manfred. The esquires had thought that he of Alcala would appear the worn one; but they found that the sick man was well, while he whom they had deemed well was faded and jaded.

To Pedro, in answer to anxious inquiries, Guy had said,—

"I have not slept, good Pedro. The torpor of the morning was but the sinking of exhaustion. I ought not to have left Ben Ahmed's house last night until I had given Miriam warning. I have been haunted by most terrible dreams in which those two muffled figures have led me a wild and fantastic course."

Pedro shook his head, and would have urged his master to defer the combat; but the knight would not listen.

Upon the ground, however, the Knight of St. Mark seemed to revive. The beams of the glorious sun were enlivening, and the air of the forest was invigorating—a blessed change from the narrow streets of the city.

"Pardon my delay," he said to Manfred. "Circumstances beyond my control have kept me back."

"Sir Guy! Thou art not well. Let us put off—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted St. Mark, with an impatient gesture. "'Tis but a passing hour of unrest. I am strong now. It is for thee to say if thy strength is up to the mark. Thou art the man to be favored."

"I ask none of it."

"Then let us close the account with all possible dispatch. If I live, I would return to the city forthwith; and if I fall, I would be spared all intervening moments of heavy doubt and anxiety."

"Guy!—What is it? Is there danger to Miriam? Ah, I read it in your face. If I can be of help—"

"No, no, Manfred. This thing is irksome. I would have it off my hands. Let us take position, and proceed. You will excuse this sword. I exchanged with Prince Haroun while I was his prisoner, and have had no opportunity to get my own blade back."

"The exchange is against you, Sir Guy. That sword is lighter than mine."

"But its temper is perfect. I am satisfied."

There was no more to be said. The knights took their places, with their esquires behind them, and as they grasped their weapons for the conflict the brotherly look died out from their faces. For the time they were enemies, bound by an oath to settle dispute in blood.

Guy was the first to advance, and his movement betrayed impatience. Manfred hoped that he might be able to disarm him, and, if possible, to break his sword. He knew there was trouble on Miriam's account, and he would render assistance in that direction if he could.

The two swords crossed with a sharp clash, and Manfred exerted every energy to bring to successful issue a master-stroke which he had learned of Michael—a stroke with which he had broken a score of swords in the hand of his esquire,—but the blade which Guy now wielded was not to be so rent.

Guy, on the other hand, had been seeking to wound his opponent in the sword arm, avoiding all other points. His purpose was to settle the affair, if possible, without taking Manfred's life. But their plans failed, and anon, in the heat of conflict, they pressed forward with the sole thought of conquest. Two warriors more nearly matched it would have been hard to find. If Guy was the stronger, Manfred was the more agile and supple. At first the conflict had been one of defence, and the esquires had breathed freely; but when the fire began to fly from eye and blade—when the blood was up, and the blows became blows for victory at any cost, the trusty henchmen held their breaths. The fray was at its height, and the teeth of the combatants were set with firm resolve, when an unlooked-for interruption came. Suddenly Pedro darted forward and extended his arm between them at the risk of having it severed.

"Hold!" he cried. "There is other trouble close at hand."

Instantly the knights dropped the points of their weapons, and fell back; and in a moment more the voice of a female was heard in loud entreaty. It came from the river, and its notes startled the heart of Sir Guy to quick, wild throbbing.

"Hark!" he whispered. "That is Miriam's voice!"

Again came the notes of pleading,—and then a cry for help. And then followed a curse from sterner lips.

"God and St. Mark!" shouted Guy, leaping forward toward the spot whence the voices came.

"Alcala to the rescue!" echoed Manfred, dashing away by Guy's side.

"St. Mark and Alcala!" cried Michael and Pedro in concert, following close upon the heels of their masters.

And this was what they found upon the river's bank:

A boat had been drawn up to the shore, and out from it had landed four men having a lady in captivity, while two other men stood by in waiting with horses in charge. The lady was the Princess Miriam, but the Prince Haroun was not of the party. He had, as he supposed, seen his prize safely beyond the limits of the city on her way to the mountains, and had left her in charge of trusty servants who were ready and willing to do his bidding—men who were to have great reward when he was king—while he himself had remained behind to attend to other matters connected with his grand plot.

One of the Moors, at last, recognized Sir Guy as the party approached from the wood.

"By Allah!" he cried, "here comes that fire-eating dog of a Christian!—Leave the horses, and take the lady!—Stand by me, comrades, and let us give the dogs a lesson!"

The first direction was given to the two grooms who held the horses, and they quickly obeyed it, taking the maiden in charge, and leading her aside. The second direction was to his armed companions who had come up with him from the boat, and the four stood their ground.

But the Moors might as well have raised their blades against a coming whirlwind. Miriam had caught sight of her lover, and had outstretched her hands imploringly toward him. Manfred, his blood already up, thanked God that he could turn his sword upon another than St. Mark; while Michael and Pedro, both aware of the foul indignity which had been cast upon the beautiful princess, took the cause as their own, and gave heart to the work before them.

The blows were few, quick, and decisive. Like a bolt shot from a catapult came St. Mark upon the dastards. The foremost man went down in a twinkling, his head cleaved by the keen Damascus blade which had once been his princely master's. Manfred engaged the second, and let daylight through his body like a flash. The other two were borne back to the river by Michael and Pedro, and tumbled unceremoniously into the rolling tide.

Guy was in time to see the two grooms mount their horses, and he saw them attempting to drag the maiden up after them; and he was in time, too, to spring to the rescue. He caught Miriam in his arms, and the horsemen dashed away out of danger.

"Miriam!—My life!—O! tell me that they have not done thee harm!"

She looked up with a beaming smile—a smile of gratitude and bliss—and threw her arms around his neck.

"Thou hast saved me again, Guy. Heaven be praised!"

At this juncture a cry from Michael called attention in another direction.

The two Moors who had been driven into the river, though both wounded, had succeeded in grasping the boat and pulling it out into the flood, and they were now clambering into it.

"Who are those men?" Guy asked, of Miriam.

"They are but tools of the prince. Were you to slay them, a dozen more might spring up in their place while the master-spirit is at large."

It was quickly decided that the two men might struggle away, and when they had gone Sir Guy led Miriam up from the scene of the conflict, and when she could command speech she told to her deliverers the story of her abduction. To Guy she confessed that she had gone into the garden with the hope of seeing him; and finally she asked him if her impression had been well founded that danger had threatened himself.

Guy evaded a direct answer to this, and led her to tell further of her adventure; and when the whole had been told, he gave her in charge for a time to Pedro and Michael while he withdrew to speak with Manfred.

The two knights went away beyond a thicket of thorn bushes, where Manfred was the first to speak:

"Guy, you would ask if our combat shall be renewed?"

"Yes. You have the right to claim it."

"Not so, Guy. There is a knightly vow which takes precedence of a conflict of personal honor. Woman in distress must be our first care. The sacred duty is binding upon me as upon you; but to you I yield the pleasant palm of bearing the Lady Miriam to a place of safety. I shall not return to the city. Do you and Pedro depart upon the mission, and I will await your return to this place. The presence of the Princess with you will be your protection in Granada; and as for Haroun, I do not think he will dare to molest you openly."

Guy bowed his head in silent meditation, and after a pause Manfred continued,—

"It is a sad business, Guy; but I cannot help it. Would to God a blow had not been struck between us!"

"Amen!" responded Guy, impressively.

"But," pursued the other, "I cannot break my oath, even though its keeping lead to death."

"Nor I," said Guy. "O! that unfortunate oath!"

"If that oath had not been spoken," asked Manfred, "would you consent that I might seek the hand of your cousin?"

"Ah," replied Guy, with deep feeling, "I have learned what it is to love since then!"

He walked away a few steps, and when he returned his brow was contracted, and his lips tightly compressed.

"Manfred, our oath may not be broken with honor. For a sufficient cause thou did'st challenge me. The casting of doubt upon thy birth by myself gave thee ample ground for demanding trial by battle. I cannot retract without acknowledging that I spoke falsely. And, moreover, we have left Castile and sought this Moorish kingdom, as other knights have done before us, for the purpose of battle. And we have unsheathed our swords, and raised them one against the other. What now remains for us to do?"

"But one thing."

"We must finish the work we have begun."

"Or be derided by each true knight we meet in all the time to come."

"Even so, Manfred. The regret comes too late. I will not return to the city until this thing is finished. Let us fight here and now. I cannot see Miriam again with this thing upon my mind. If I fall thou wilt conduct her in safety to her home. Thou wilt defend her as I would have done. Promise me."

"No, no," cried Manfred. "It cannot be so. Wert thou to fall, and by my hand, how could I present myself to your beloved? How would she receive offer of assistance from the hand red with your blood? By Heavens! Guy, it cannot be."

"What, then, shall we do?"

"Return thou with the maiden, and rejoin me here. I will await thee. Thou art not more anxious than am I; but I will not have such a burden upon my spirit as thy plan entails. It is entirely unequal. If I fall thou canst go to Miriam, and she will receive thee joyfully, and I shall be freed from care; but if thou fallest, thou art freed from all care, while pain beyond measure awaits me in the agony and curse of thy loved one. No, Guy, thine own good sense will show to thee the wrong of this."

Guy extended his hand to the grasp of his companion.

"Thou art right, Manfred,—right in part; but thou must return with me to the city. Thy staying behind would cause questioning which I could not answer; and, moreover, it might seem as if thou would'st not give thy support to the lady."

Manfred was upon the point of answering, when a loud tramp was heard close at hand, and while they waited to discover the cause a body of horsemen dashed into the place, with Ben Ahmed in advance.

There were exclamations of surprise, and then the Alcaide hurriedly demanded to know if aught had been seen of his daughter.

"She is gone," he said, "and I have intelligence that a lady, closely muffled up, and attended by at least one servant of Prince Haroun, was brought away from the landing of St. Omar in a boat."

Sir Guy quickly answered,—

"My lord, rest in peace. It hath again been my good fortune to assist in the rescue of thy fair daughter from ruffianly hands."

"She is then safe?"

"She is safe."

"Allah be praised! Where is she?"

"Follow me, and thou shalt find her, and hear the story from her own lips."

And then the two knights led the way to the river's bank, where Miriam was soon clasped in her father's embrace. If she was not overjoyed upon beholding him, the old man did not notice it. He did not know that his child would have preferred at that time the further care of the Christian knight. He did not dream that she had even held the thought in mind that she would rather go to Castile with Guy of St. Mark than return to Granada where her father and the king might share in her protection. Still she loved her father, and she was grateful for the deep love and solicitude which he manifested in return.

When the words of thanksgiving had been spoken Miriam told to her father the story of her abduction by the Prince, and he, with an oath, swore that she should suffer no more persecution at Haroun's hands.

"If it hath come to this," he said, "the King must do his duty. The people of Granada will sustain him in punishing the traitor."

And then he turned with gushing thanks to the knights, for he knew that they had both shared in the work of rescue,—and not only they, but their esquires as well. He had deep thanks for all, and he urged that they should accompany him back to his house.

"Already," he said, to Guy, "is Sir Manfred my guest. Come thou and abide with him. My room is ample, and thou shalt not find my hospitality wanting."

"Not yet," answered Guy. "We had planned to conduct the lady back to her home, but since thou art come there is no need. Sir Manfred and myself have business in another direction. Excuse me for the present. At some future time I may accept thine offer."

Miriam cast a quick, anxious glance toward her lover, and when he saw it he went to her side.

"Pardon me, dear lady," he said, the pressure of his hand giving token of feeling which he could not there put into words. "Heaven which hath been so merciful in the past will not desert the worthy in the time to come."

"Guy," she whispered, "what is this? Why must you remain behind? O! what is it?"

"I remain with those who are friends to us both. Ask me no more. By and by thou shalt know all.—There—go with thy father. He awaits thee."

He pressed her hand to his lips, and in a moment more he passed that hand to the care of Ben Ahmed.

Faint and sick under the weight of a great fear, Miriam suffered herself to be led away; and her father thought, as she drooped and moaned, that it was all the result of Prince Haroun's wickedness; and he vowed anew that the Prince should be punished.

The Alcaide was accompanied by half a score of well-armed attendants, and having once more bade the Christians that they should come directly to his house upon their return to the city, he prepared for departure.

Miriam was lifted to a seat upon one of the horses, and once more she looked toward her lover. He smiled as he met her gaze, but in that smile there was neither hope nor joy. The pain beneath could not be hidden, and the sharp eyes of the maiden saw it. She turned away with an aching heart, for full well she knew there was danger in the mystery which surrounded the brave knight whom she so fondly and devotedly loved.

CHAPTER XI.

PEDRO'S INVOCATION, AND ITS RESULT.

Guy of St. Mark stood, with his arms folded upon his breast, and watched the cavalcade of the Alcaide until it had disappeared beyond the trees, and when he could no longer see those who held his beloved in charge he turned toward the river. The movement had been made that he might gain a season for quiet reflection, but as he turned he came upon the esquires who were engaged in the ghostly occupation of removing from the bank the bodies of the two Moors who had been slain—two whom Ben Ahmed had recognized as followers of Haroun. The Alcaide had spurned them with his foot, and would have them left for the beasts of the forest to devour; but Manfred had thought it better to give them to the swift current of waters, and had so directed the esquires to do.

"It is better so, indeed," said Michael, coming up from the work. "The river will take them quickly from our sight."

Guy stood again watchful, this time watching the two floating bodies; and when they had drifted away beyond the intervening foliage that fringed the shore at a distance below, he aroused himself, and turned to his companion knight.

"Now, Sir Manfred, let us hasten with our work. I think we shall suffer no more intrusion."

"I am ready, Guy."

They walked a short distance, and stopped.

"The battle is to come now in earnest," said Guy. "If I fall, thou wilt return to Castile. There will be nothing to detain thee here."

"I shall return and see my mother," answered Manfred, solemnly.

"And thou wilt see Ida?"

Manfred shook his head.

"Thou hast my permission," said Guy. "I withhold it no longer. If thou canst win her, there will be none to object."

"I—win her!" echoed Manfred, in a hollow, startled tone. "And when she asks for her cousin Guy, what answer shall I give to her? Win her? O! what [illegible] to offer her the hand red with her kinsman's [illegible] so wretched a result hangs upon our [illegible] us fight to the death, that we may both fall. As God liveth, I do not wish to survive thee!"

Guy's strong frame shook like a tree riven by the wind.

They repaired to the open glade where they had already [illegible] crossed their swords, and commanded the esquires that they should remain at a distance.

"Just Heaven!" cried Pedro, turning an imploring, a[illegible] upon his companion, "is there no [illegible] which we can stop this unnatural combat? If they fight now, both must fall. I read it in their looks. Good Michael, what can we do? See! They ar[illegible] ready to begin!"

"At this moment," said Michael, "I f[illegible] that I would willingly give my own li[illegible] stop the bloody work; but what can w[illegible] Alas for an honor which can hang so f[illegible] upon two brave men!"

At this point the two swords met [illegible] fierce, sharp clang.

"O!" cried Pedro, in fervid zeal, [illegible] now is the mystic genius that hath [illegible] to preside over the brave and true s[illegible] house? Holy St. Mark, thine aid I i[illegible] ever thou wilt help a son of earth, [illegible] thy helping presence at this time! [illegible]

"—st! Hark!" uttered Michael, [illegible] ear to the ground. "By San Jago [illegible] tramp of horses!—What ho!—My[illegible] Hold! Strangers come this way![illegible]

The knights dropped the poin[illegible] swords; but it was only for a mom[illegible]

"This is folly," said Guy. "Let [illegible] will, they shall not interfere here. [illegible] again!"

And again the sharp steel rang [illegible] the air as the combat was resumed.

"For shame!" cried Pedro. "La[illegible] coming."

"Ladies?" echoed Guy and Manfre[illegible] breath.

"Look for yourselves."

The opposing blades were lowered, and [illegible] knights looked in the direction pointed o[illegible] and they beheld a brave cavalcade of sto[illegible] men-at-arms, with ladies in charge; and th[illegible] garbs and the trappings were not Mooris[illegible] but Castilian.

"Santiago!" shouted Michael, "I see old Hafed, the major-domo of Alcala!"

"Aye," responded Pedro, swinging his hat in ecstasy, "and with him rides Alonzo, the brave captain of the guard of St. Ildefonso!"

"Just Heaven!" muttered Guy. "What is this?"

"As I live, 'tis my mother!" gasped Manfred.

"Thy mother," responded Pedro, "and the fair Marchioness, Ida of Ildefonso, bears her company! Verily our patron saint hath heard and answered my prayer."

It was indeed as had been said; and as Pedro spoke the head of the advancing cavalcade entered the glade, and came close to where our knights stood. Old Hafed recognized Manfred, and sprang from his saddle to embrace him. His threescore years had not left his body weak, nor materially stiffened his limbs.

At the same moment Alonzo recognized Guy, and as quickly dismounted to greet him.

Morgiana, when she saw her son safe and well, slipped from her seat without assistance, and flew to his embrace.

"Manfred!—My son! Thank God I find thee once again!"

"My own mother!" was all he could utter; and he pressed her to his bosom, and held her there with grateful emotion. It seemed to him that Heaven had sent her. She had come upon the pledge of Guy that he might ask for Ida's hand if he lived. She had come to avert the blow that must else have been very soon fatal to one or both—a blow that must have left untold mystery upon the bloody record.

And Ida had flown to the embrace of her cousin. Beautiful as an angel of mercy she seemed, thus coming between him and the dark future which had erst impended.

"Guy," she cried, as soon as she could assure herself that the scene was real, "thou wilt not deceive me?—The Countess and I are in time to prevent a fearful catastrophe?"

"Ida!—How mean you?" demanded Guy, stammeringly. He was surprised indeed—not by her evident meaning, however, but that

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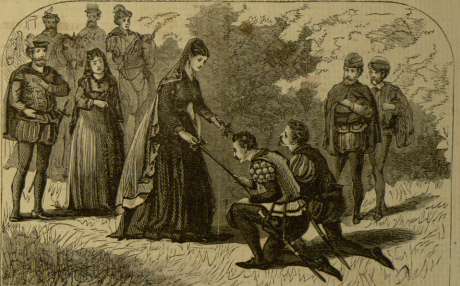

IDA OF ST. ILDEFONSO RECEIVING THE SWORDS OF THE KNIGHTS.

she should have gained the knowledge, and should have acted upon it.

"Ah, Guy, thou knowest my meaning. Thou and Manfred have quarrelled. Is it not so?"

"Not quarrelled, Ida."

"But you came hither to mortal combat?"

"Ida—"

"Ah! thy confusion betrays thee. We were sure of it, and we have come to prevent it. O! Guy, if thou could'st know what we have suffered!—We knew, when thou and Manfred were gone, that Granada was thy destination; and we knew the work thou had'st in hand. We summoned our most trusty retainers and started in pursuit. But, O! such delays! We were detained a week in the wild passes of the Morena, and we lost our way in the forest of the Guadalquiver. But we are here at length; and we find you both alive. Tell me—tell me,—Were we mistaken?"

"No, fair cousin,—thine instinct of love led thee aright."

"And thou art Manfred's enemy? O, Guy!"

"I am not Manfred's enemy."

"And yet, not his friend?"

"Ask him."

"May I speak with him freely, and with thy consent?"

"Yes."

"Guy!—answer me truly: Is there enmity between thee and Manfred?"

"There is not."

"And yet thou would'st have stricken him to the death had we not come. Thou wert engaged in the combat even now. I saw it."

"Ida, I tell thee Manfred is my friend. Go to him, and he can explain. Within this hour I have unsaid the opposition which I had put in the way of his love. He loves thee truly and devotedly, and as God hears me, I do believe his heart is just and upright. Will not that suffice thee for now? I can explain no more."

"Bless thee, Guy, for these words!"

And with this the Castilian maiden turned from her cousin and advanced toward the spot where Manfred stood with his mother. The beaming of her eyes was glorious, and the light of a joy ecstatic illumined her beautiful face. She met the look of her knight, and she read therein his love and his truth. Her great gratitude for the blessing of the hour led her over all obstacles of senseless form, and with her heart's tenderness of affection in her speech, she extended both her hands, and called him by name.

Had the whole court of Castile, with Leon to boot, been upon the scene, Manfred would have done as he did. He opened his arms and took the loved one to his fond embrace, and in the presence of the multitude he kissed her and blessed her.

There was a season in which questions and answers came with bewildering rapidity,—the tongues of knights and ladies, and of esquires and men-at-arms, were running together,—but at length a general stage of information was arrived at, and the leaders found themselves able to discuss the more important matters of the strange and unexpected situation.

"We did not meet and connive in concert," said Ida, addressing both the knights in explanation of the appearance of the Countess and herself. "I, when I had summoned my captain, and made arrangement for the journey, knew not that Morgiana had her suspicions aroused in the same direction. I knew that you had gone to Granada to settle a quarrel which might not be settled under the strict laws of Castile; and I knew that in me rested the cause of that quarrel. It was my duty to stop it if I could. So I summoned my attendants, and prepared to set forth."

"While I," said Morgiana, "having made myself sure that my son had gone to repel by arms a seeming aspersion cast upon his birth, and feeling that all the rest of earth combined could not repay me for the loss of my beloved child, also made preparations for the journey to Granada, little dreaming that the fair Marchioness was to bear me company."

"We met," added Ida, "upon the road, and when, upon comparing notes, we had found that our objects were identical, we joined our forces, and proceeded together. And now," she continued, after a slight pause, a new and sublime light gleaming in her radiant eyes the while, "I ask that your difficulty may be healed henceforth. From our good Countess I have learned the truth,—she has told me all she had to tell,—and I am satisfied. Guy, wilt thou, too, be satisfied?"

"I am satisfied, fair cousin," replied the knight.

"But, Guy, wilt thou give over this quarrel?"

"We have had no quarrel."

"Ah! Thou triflest. Thou dost not answer [illegible]estly. Speak as I bid thee."

[illegible]y glanced at Manfred, and was silent.

"[illegible]anfred," demanded Ida, turning to the [illegible] knight, "wilt thou, at my command, [illegible]ver thy share in this trouble?"

[illegible] Morgiana, with an appealing look to [illegible]n, silently, but most eloquently, sec[illegible]he request.

"[illegible] Ida," cried the Knight of Alcala, "[illegible]istakest thy cousin entirely. 'Tis not [illegible]ity that holds him silent from the [illegible]. Right gladly would he give over [illegible] if it could be honorably done. I know [illegible]s true and upright heart is only good[illegible]ard me."

"[illegible] cousin," added Guy, as Ida looked in[illegible]y upon him, "thou art a Castilian [illegible]d should'st know the laws of chival[illegible]ot in the heat of passion, but upon due [illegible]ration, have our swords been drawn. [illegible]ave solemnly appealed to the trial by [illegible], and how shall we escape the issue? God [illegible]s our hearts at this moment. The great[illegible] calamity of earth that could befall me [illegible]ould be the blood of Manfred upon my [illegible]ands. And he hath sworn that he would rather die than do me mortal harm."

Ida of St. Ildefonso bowed her head, with her hands tightly clasped. Presently she looked up, and the expression of pain and bewilderment had given place to the beaming of a brave resolve. Her beautiful features were illumined by a light supernal, and the rich moisture of her eyes rendered their lustre angelic,—for her mission was an angel's mission indeed. She advanced to Manfred, and extended to him her hand.

"Sir Manfred," she said, with a slight tremulousness in her tone, but with a grand heroism, nevertheless, "thou did'st once tell me of thy love, and did'st ask me if I would give thee mine in return. Thou knowest I have loved thee well and truly. All here know it. Dost love me still?"

"Love thee?" cried the knight, in rapturous bewilderment. "O! all other thoughts and aspirations of life are centred in my love for thee!"

"Then listen," pursued Ida, in tones of tender solemnity: "I am mistress, in my own right, of all my broad domain, and I am mistress of my own hand. That hand, Manfred, I offer now to thee. Wilt take it, and be true and loving to the end?"

With wild emotion Manfred folded the noble girl to his bosom, murmuring, as he did so,—

"As I do unto thee, so may God do unto me! I accept the boon, my precious love, and the wide world holds no lure that can turn my heart from this blessed service!"

At length Ida disengaged herself from the embrace of her lover, and wiping the tears from her eyes she turned to her cousin.

"Guy," she said, with a triumphant light gleaming through the still gathering moisture, "if I mistake not, there is a law of chivalry which thou hast not mentioned—a law that stands high and primal in the knightly code:—Honor and homage and succor to woman. Behold my affianced! In smiting him thou smitest me. Guy, thou art of mine own kin; and I demand of thee that thou shalt save me from the agony of despair. Wilt thou answer me?"

Guy hesitated a moment—not from perversity, but rather from bewilderment—and then he drew his sword from its scabbard, and taking it by the blade he extended the hilt to his cousin.

"Noble lady," he said, "to thee I yield my sword, and thee I make my judge. Our passage was on thy account, and thou hast settled the question in dispute. Be the result what it may I accept thy decision, and will faithfully abide the issue."

He knelt as he spoke, and Ida took the sword from his hand.

And then Manfred, drawing his sword, also knelt before her, saying, as he did so,—

"Noble lady, be thou my judge as well. No true knight of Christendom will dare to cavil at the judgment which thou shalt render. I yield thee my sword."

Ida held both the swords in her hands, with the points resting upon the ground; and so she stood for a brief space in silent thought, and all around her was hushed in solemn stillness. When she spoke there was both dignity and rapture in her tones:

"Sir Guy, I yield thee back thy sword, and with it thy peace of mind. Thou art henceforth in honor bound to guard and love and cherish the friend whom I thus restore to thee!

"Sir Manfred, thy sword, too, I yield back to thee; and with it I give to thee my hand; and in taking this hand thou art henceforth bound, as a true and loyal knight, to love and cherish and protect my kinsmen whom I regard!"

The knights bowed low in token of acquiescence, and having kissed the fair hand from which they received back their swords they arose to their feet well content with the judgment which had been rendered.

A joyful acclaim from those who stood around filled the air. The retainers of St. Ildefonso and of Alcala, who had loved both the knights, and who had known the deadly nature of the business which had called them to Granada, were transported beyond measure by this happy termination. The Lady Morgiana sank down upon her knees in her gratitude to Heaven, and Ida knelt by her side.

But of all who expressed joy on that occasion none exceeded in wild demonstration the jubilant antics of the two esquires. Pedro was ready henceforth and forever to swear by the patron saint of his house; for he firmly believed that his invocation to St. Mark had been mysteriously answered. He cared nothing for the known sequence of natural events. He only knew that, in most direful extremity, when the last hope of earth had faded out, he had appealed to the holy St. Mark, and that relief had come upon the instant.

Of all that crew old Hafed alone joined not in the general joy. He was glad that the brave knights had been reconciled from their quarrel, but he could not give way to the exuberant demonstrations of his companions. He was silent and moody, as though from the presence of still impending evil; but when questioned upon the cause thereof he refused to answer.

CHAPTER XII.

EAVESDROPPERS.

The question of the abiding place of the Castilian ladies while in Granada was answered as soon as asked. Considering the service which they had rendered to the Alcaide the knights had no hesitation in claiming his hospitality for the new-comers.

Accordingly, as soon as arrangements had been made for moving, the party, under the leadership of Pedro and Michael, set forth for that destination. At first Manfred rode by his mother's side, leaving Guy to the care of Ida; but after a time Guy, observing that the eyes of his fair cousin were prone to wander after his knightly companion, fell back by Morgiana's side, upon which Manfred, with a grateful smile, rode forward to the vacant place.

And now the ladies were called upon to give a more particular account of their adventures on the journey from Castile, and in return the knights told much of their own doings.

Sir Guy had told the Countess del Alcala of the service which had been rendered to the Alcaide, and had added that they might be sure of a warm welcome.

"We have thought," he continued, "that there could be no place more appropriately sought. The public inns of Granada do not offer such accommodations as would befit our Castilian ladies of rank."

Morgiana heard, but made no reply. She seemed buried in thought of her own. After a pause Guy ventured,—

"Dear lady, if I mistake not, you have been in Granada before."

Morgiana started, and trembled, and for an instant there was a frightened look upon her face. The knight saw it, and would have craved her pardon, but she intercepted him:

"Sir Guy, my noble husband, the kind and generous Gomez, knew my whole story. I have not told it to others, because he forbade me. I am not a stranger to Granada, though it has been many years since my feet last pressed her sunny soil. As you have long suspected, I am a Granadan by birth—a Granadan and a Moor. Does the confession shock you?"

"No, lady." And his beaming, full-hearted look gave token of his sincerity.

"And yet," pursued the Countess, "you cannot easily bring yourself to granting the propriety of marriage between the Moor and the Christian?"

A warm flush suffused the knight's face, and the light of his eyes was wondrously deep and significant.

"Once," he replied, after a brief pause, "I might have taken counsel of my prejudice alone; but we gain knowledge by experience and observation. Love is the primal power. Love is potent in the human heart; and I do not believe Heaven ever required that a love true and sincere should be sacrificed to conditions imposed by man."

"Ah, Sir Guy," cried the Countess, with a bright, sparkling smile, "thou hast caught a new inspiration. Thou art the oracle of Love itself. The divine flame hath found an altar in thine own heart."

"Thou hast my secret, lady."

"I thought so. And the fair daughter of the Alcaide is the object of thy love?"

"Yes."

"God grant that thy love may prosper. I shall see her. I will help thee if I can."

"Bless thee, noble lady!"

Ere long after this they entered the city, and finally arrived at the residence of the Alcaide, where, as had been anticipated, they received a warm and hearty welcome.

Deeming that Ben Ahmed would appreciate true candor, the knights had resolved to tell him the exact truth of their situation, as they could thus the more readily account for the presence of the ladies. And Guy was spokesman. He told of the quarrel, without the primal cause, and of the challenge, and of the coming to Granada for the duel, on account of the law of Castile which forbade such encounters. And then he told of the discovery made by the ladies, and of their coming to prevent the hostile meeting.

The Alcaide was grateful for the confidence thus reposed, and in return he bade the party to consider his house as their home while they remained in Granada; and he furthermore insisted upon providing quarters for the men-at-arms who had accompanied the ladies. After this he conducted the Marchioness and the Countess to an inner apartment, where he introduced them to his daughter, and gave them to her charge for entertainment.

At first Miriam looked with distrust upon Ida, for the young Marchioness, in speaking of the friends with whom she had come from the forest, mentioned only the name of Guy. She clung to Morgiana lovingly, and shrank farther and farther away from the beautiful maiden of Castile.

Morgiana saw, and quickly understood. Her own instinct of love was supreme. She knew Guy's secret,—and Guy's secret was the secret of Miriam. She saw also the cloud upon Ida's brow—a cloud of chill and pain that she was, from some unseen cause, ungraciously received. She saw this, and then she spoke to Miriam, confident that she could dispel the gloom.

"Dear lady, we shall not trespass long. I cannot speak for Sir Guy; but for myself and Manfred I may say that we shall soon return to Castile; and I think I may say that the Lady Ida—"

"Will go whithersoever her Manfred goeth," broke in Ida, impulsively.

Miriam caught her breath, and turned toward the Castilian princess.

"Dear sister, Manfred is your lover?"

"Yes. Our troth hath been this day plighted. Our love is as old as our remembrance."

And Miriam opened her arms and caught Ida to her bosom; and from that time they were as sisters in truth and in deed.

Guy would have returned to his inn for lodging when the night had set in; but Ben Ahmed would not allow it.

"I have room enough," he said, "and my friends must share it. And, moreover, both you and Manfred will be safer here. I shall see the King on the morrow, and insist upon the immediate apprehension of Haroun; but until the Prince is forcibly restrained be sure he will seek revenge upon you for the part you have taken against him. The same cause that makes him your deadly enemy makes me your devoted friend. So remain with me in safety."

Guy accepted the offer, though his heart smote him for the treachery which his love forced upon him. Not alone for his intermeddling in the forest was Haroun his enemy, as he knew full well. The Moorish Prince knew that he loved Miriam, and that Miriam loved him in return; and on this account was his deadly ire aroused. And this the Alcaide did not know. He had not even a suspicion in that direction.

On the following day, agreeably to his resolve, Ben Ahmed visited the King, and on his return Guy and Manfred, who were together, questioned him concerning his success.

"The King is governed by his folly," cried the Alcaide, bitterly. "I have expounded to him the full enormity of Haroun's offence, and yet he hath thoughts of mercy.—He deems it mercy, but I deem it fear. In the event of his own death, Haroun is the only male heir to the throne; and he fears that the violent death of the heir might cause dangerous convulsion in the kingdom. Still, he will keep a watch upon Haroun's movements. As you are already aware, Haroun's father was a usurper. Jusef was the lawful king even while Mohammed reigned; and before he died Mohammed would have accomplished Jusef's assassination in prison could he have had his will,—he would have done this that his son Haroun might reign after him. And now Jusef fears that the people will think the execution of Haroun an act of pure revenge."

"I can understand," remarked Manfred, "how the monarch's mind can be thus abused; but I do not deem it a kingly attribute. It is a false tenderness which makes a ruler's hand weak to govern."

"The true idea!" pronounced Ben Ahmed, appreciatingly. "I must impress it upon Jusef's mind. He is a good man, and deserves to have no enemies."

"Would to Heaven," exclaimed Guy, dropping his hand upon the hilt of his sword, "that the Prince himself, in place of his base minions, had stood before me in the forest!"

"Amen!" uttered the Alcaide.

"He may—he may—run against my steel yet. If he does I will do my best to rid Jusef of a dangerous enemy."

"Surely," returned Ben Ahmed, "I wish thee no harm, Sir Guy; but I could devoutly pray that the consummation thou speakest of might speedily come."

"Thou would'st rid the King of a dangerous enemy, and thyself of a dangerous rival," remarked Manfred, after the Alcaide had turned away.

"No," said Guy. "I do not hold the Prince as a rival to be feared. Rather do I fear the King in that respect."

"But," suggested Manfred, "if Jusef is kind and considerate will he not listen to Miriam's pleading?"

"Ah," responded the Knight of St. Mark, with a dubious shake of the head, "there is much of stern, cold policy mingled with the King's love for Miriam. With her for his wife he combines new power against Haroun. With a child born of such a marriage the throne becomes firm and strong beneath him."

And with the weight of this thought he turned away and walked apart, wondering if it were within the reach of possibility that the great prayer of his heart could ever be answered.

It was on the afternoon of this same day that Manfred bethought himself of old Hafed, his mother's faithful friend and henchman. He knew that Hafed had been, in other years, well acquainted in Granada, and he proposed now that the old man should walk out with him; but upon making inquiries he was informed that he was confined to his chamber by sickness; and the youth at once hastened to visit him. He found Hafed suffering from a cold, but nothing which appeared serious.

"My good Hafed," said Manfred, "it would do you good to walk out. Come,—the air is mild and balmy, and the sun is sinking toward the mountains. Will you not walk with me?"

"No, my master," said the old man, shaking his head. "I do not feel like it."

"You are not so sick as that, Hafed."

"We may have sickness, Sir Manfred, not apparent to outward observation. I cannot go out."

The youth was about to turn away, when the old man stopped him.

"Manfred, you can trust in my friendship?"

A moment before Manfred had felt a spirit of petulance; but now, as he looked into Hafed's earnest, truthful face, he felt it no more.

"Yes, Hafed. I know you are my friend."

"Then I ask you to trust me without questioning. I care not to show myself in Granada; and it were well if you had the same care."

"How, Hafed!—Is there danger?"

"There may be."

"May be?"

"Aye. I dare not swear to danger; but there is reason for its apprehension. If there be danger, it is danger of the darkest kind—danger to both yourself and your mother. I would have prevented my lady from coming hither had I been able; but she would not listen. Your madcap excursion drew her on in spite of me. But we may be careful yet, and make haste away from this place."

"You think," said Manfred, with an attempt at assumed carelessness, "that our passages-at-arms with the servants of the Prince have brought me into this danger?"

The old man shook his head.

"I speak not of what I think, but of what I know. Ask me no more; for I shall make no explanation in Granada. I only ask that you will trust me. Keep yourself within doors, Manfred, and all may be well; but as true as God liveth, there is danger abroad!"

After Manfred had left the chamber he dwelt long and seriously upon the words of Hafed. He sat down in his own apartment, and reflected. He called to mind circumstances which had not before particularly impressed him. He remembered that on more than one occasion his steps had been dogged, and that he had found strange men watching him with close scrutiny. He remembered, too, that men had approached his esquire with strange questionings. He remembered the visit of Abdalla.

What was this mystery? He had thought that Guy was the one who had personal danger to apprehend. Could it be that the danger was greater to himself?

The sun was sinking behind the distant mountain-tops when Manfred walked out into the garden. At a short distance from the house he observed Guy advancing up one of the narrow walks. At another time he would have hailed his companion gladly, but now he wished to be alone with his own thoughts, and he avoided him. He stepped aside into another path, and Guy, who was walking with his head bent, did not see him.

Had Manfred spoken with his friend he would have been cautioned not to venture into the far part of the garden. Guy would have told him that he had himself come from there because he had heard voices which he did not like—voices of men who seemed to be lying in wait for prey,—and he was going to watch that Miriam did not go forth.

But Manfred received not the warning, and he went on—went slowly and thoughtfully on till he had reached an arbor near to the rear wall, where he sat down and talked with himself of the mystery which he fain would penetrate.

He did not see the dark forms that crouched behind the shrubbery close at hand,—he did not observe that these same dark forms were drawing silently nearer and nearer.

"What is it?" he muttered, with his hands clasped upon his bosom. In making the movement he felt the talisman which was suspended from his neck, and he drew it forth and gazed upon it. The immense ruby caught the last rays of expiring day, reflecting from its wondrous depths a light like flaming blood, while the surrounding diamonds flashed and blazed and sparkled like fervid jets shot from the central fire.

And yet Manfred did not hear. He did not hear the step that crept close behind him,—he did not see the dark eyes that gazed over his shoulder upon the gleaming talisman.

"O!" he murmured, "if I could but solve the mystery of this amulet. I wonder was it ever my father's? My mother hath certainly intimated as much."

Scarcely had the words dropped from his lips when he became aware of a hot, quick breathing behind him, and hastily slipping the talisman back into his bosom, he turned and beheld dark faces and glittering eyes peering upon him from the gathering gloom.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"The most charming girl in the world!" said Mr. Baltic emphatically.

"That's what they all of 'em say," said his friend Nicholas Peckley, who rejoiced in the glaring fact that he was an old bachelor past all redemption. "It's quite surprising what a number of the most charming girls there are! Well, Baltic, I wish you joy, I'm sure!"

Mr. Baltic rubbed his hands complacently.

"You see," said he, "she's none of your sixteen-year-old slips; she is a rose, as one may say, in the full bloom, is my Myrtilla—just twenty-seven."

"She looks all of that," said his friend dubiously. "*I* should have put it at ten years older, but appearances are deceitful."

"Envious dog!" thought Mr. Baltic to himself as he trotted briskly down the street. "Wishes he was in my place, I haven't a doubt."

And thus meditating, Mr. Brutus Baltic turned his steps toward the casket that contained his heart's jewel—in other words, the house where Miss Myrtilla Hopkinson lived.

The front door was open; so Mr. Baltic walked complacently in, with the air of a man who feels himself thoroughly and entirely at home, and tiptoed up the stairs.

"Dear girl! I'll give her a surprise!" said Mr. Baltic to himself.

Miss Myrtilla sat at the parlor table, her back toward the door, busily employed in reading a letter, while around her lay scattered pens, ink, paper, an open desk, and the paraphernalia of epistolary occupation.

"One of *my* notes," thought the love-smitten swain; but while these thoughts passed through his mind, a board in the flooring creaked a trumpet of warning. Miss Hopkinson looked around, with a little shriek.

"My goodness gracious!" cried Miss Myrtilla, jumping up.

"I have caught you, Petkins!" cried Mr. Baltic, playfully making a grasp at the note.

But Miss Hopkinson evaded his movement, and thrust the note under a pile of newspapers. But as she did so, Mr. Baltic perceived, to his inexpressible surprise and dismay, that the billet, although in an unmistakably masculine handwriting, was none of his penning.

"Myrtilla!" he exclaimed reproachfully.

"Oh, Brutus, dear, how you startled my poor nerves!" cooed Myrtilla, tripping forward, with outstretched hands.

Before Mr. Baltic could select appropriate words in which to demand an explanation from his sweetheart, the tête-à-tête was unfortunately interrupted by the entrance of Myrtilla's married sister. But as they parted on the staircase, Mr. Baltic said:

"Myrtilla, when I came in this afternoon—"

"Yes, dear," purred the fair enslaver.

"—You were reading a letter—a letter, Myrtilla, from a gentleman!"

Miss Hopkinson colored scarlet.

"Brutus, you surely don't doubt *me*!"

"Will you let me see the letter?"

"No."

Mr. Baltic banged out of the house *a la* jealous Romeo. Miss Hopkinson dissolved into tears.

"O dear! O dear! O dear!" she bewailed herself. "What *shall* I do?"

Mr. Baltic went home in a towering passion of jealous rage, and penned a note which would have done no discredit to any tragedy hero in the land.

"False one," it commenced in very large commercial round-hand, "I give you twenty-four hours for an explanation. If, at the expiration of that period, you still persist in refusing to show me your *clandestine correspondence*, I shall regard our mutual relations as at an end. B. B."

Mr. Baltic read this effusion over and over again, with constantly increasing satisfaction.

"I rather think that will bring her around, if anything will," he said to himself. "And I won't post it neither. I'll leave it at the door myself."

The dusk was only faintly illuminated by here and there the yellow gleam of an occasional gas-lamp when Mr. Baltic stalked up to the residence of Miss Hopkinson once more. Two figures were at the area gate—a woman and a man—whispering in the twilight.

"Good!" thought Mr. Baltic. "It's Bridget and her young man. A good, faithful girl that. I'll give my note to Bridget."

But, as he approached, the dread certainty stole over him that it was *not* Bridget and her lover, but Myrtilla and—and—whom?

Stricken as it were to stone, he watched Myrtilla give the man money. He heard hurried sentences exchanged. He saw the villain creep away, like a sinuous serpent, through the dusk.

Now was the moment for action—now, or never!

"Woman!" he shrieked, pouncing forth on the unconscious Miss Myrtilla, "I have detected your manœuvres at last! Quick! give me the packet of letters he handed to you? *I* saw him!"

"I will die sooner!" screeched Miss Myrtilla.

In the conflict, the box fell to the ground, its lid separating itself and rolling away; something clinked out upon the pavement. Brutus stooped to pick it up; it was a gleaming double set of false teeth!

"Eh!" cried he. "How! why—"

Miss Myrtilla sank on the area step, hiding her face in her hands.

"Is *this* all?" said Mr. Baltic.

"All!" echoed Myrtilla. "Oh, Brutus, I would have perished sooner than let you know!"

"And that—that villain—"

"Was the dentist's young man!" sobbed Miss Hopkinson.

Light seemed to flash through the murky gloom of Mr. Baltic's seething soul.

"My own Myrtilla! And that note?"

"Don't look at me so, Brutus!" trembled the fair one. "It was the dentist's bill. And now I *know* you hate me."

"Not at all, my dear," said Mr. Baltic, raising his tearful betrothed. "Let me whisper you a secret: *mine* are false too. Perish all deceit henceforward! Myrtilla, queen of my soul, why did you not confide in me at once?"

And so Cupid, the little god of love, folded his wings peacefully above the empty box which had once held Myrtilla Hopkinson's complete set of "uppers and lowers."

WIT AND HUMOR.

"You're a happy dog, in not being married, my dear Jones," said old Deacon Praddles. A moment afterwards, on Brown's speaking of his wife and three children, the deacon exclaimed "Ah, you're a happy man, neighbor Brown, in having a family." "Why, Deacon," said a bystander, "how contradictory your remarks are!" "Not at all," replied the Deacon. "I said the man who is not married was a happy *dog*, and that the man who has a family is a happy *man*. Nothing contradictory, sir—nothing at all. I know what I say, sir."

A couple of neighbors living in Westchester county had a long and envenomed litigation about a small spring which they both claimed. The judge, wearied out with the case, at last said, "What is the use of making so much fuss about a little water?" "Your Honor will see the use of it," replied one of the lawyers, "when I inform you that the parties are both milkmen!" The roar of laughter which followed, proved that the entire audience saw the point.

An enthusiastic husband, whose wife saved him the expense of a new spring suit by rehabilitating his old one, thus gushingly expresses his feelings:

"Give me the wife that's on the watch
For every little rent or scratch,
And cures it with a timely patch,
Before you know it;
O, she's a woman fit to match
A king or poet."

"Why didn't you let that Broadway store to Mr. A, when he called this morning?" asked a heavy real estate owner of his agent, the other day. "Well, sir, because he failed a while ago, and I thought I'd wait and consult you about it." "How much did he fail for?" "About a quarter of a million, sir." "How much did he pay?" "Twenty cents on the dollar, sir." "Let him have the store, then; he's got plenty of money."

A young fop of twenty-six having been called an old bachelor by a lady at a party, objected to the appellation, and offered to leave the question to an elderly gentleman present. This being assented to, he said to the old man, "Should I be called *old*, as I am but twenty-six?" "Well," was the reply, "that depends on how you take it. For a man, twenty-six is young; but for a goose, it is rather old."

A Philadelphian recently lost his wife, and a young miss of six said to his little daughter of about the same age, "Your pa will marry again, won't he?" "O yes," was the reply, "but I think he'll wait till after the funeral."

A quack doctor advertises that persons afflicted with deafness may hear of him at a house in Fourth street, and that blind people can see him at the same place, daily, from eight till eleven o'clock.

An illiterate preacher reading the verse, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him," read out, "This is the *hair comb*!" and the laughter of irreverent auditors drowned the remainder of the sentence.

"This place reminds me of the influenza," said a doctor, who was listening to the discussions and votes in the United States Senate. "Why so?" asked his friend. "Because sometimes the *ayes* have it, and sometimes the *noes*."

A Long Island poet says of a recently deceased carpenter:

"No wonder he sawed short life's span,
For long he was a(n)ailing man."

"Is the Judge just behind, there?" asked a waiting lawyer of a gentleman who came into court the other morning. "I don't know; but if he is, he was never *just* before," was the reply.

A gentleman having an exceedingly deaf servant was advised by a friend to discharge him. "No, no," said the kind-hearted man; "if I should he would never hear of another situation."

"Mother, a brooklet means a little brook, doesn't it? and an eaglet, a little eagle?" "Yes, my darling." "Then, ma, does an eyelet mean a little eye, and a hamlet, a little ham?"

It has been found that in nearly every civilized country the tree that bears most fruit for market is the axle-tree.

The positive, comparative and superlative degrees of getting on in the world are, get on, get honor, get honest.

Some doctors seem to think that patients should be treated like pigs—first killed, then cured.

CURRENT ITEMS.

While Robert Williard, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, was driving toward home a few miles in the country, he missed his way, and as darkness overtook him, he drove over an embankment and fell head foremost into a deep hole. Being covered by the wagon and a sand slide, he could not get out; and, incredible as it may seem, he lived until morning, standing upon his head, and suffering the most horrible agony for nine hours. Shortly after being found he died.

A Heartless Husband.—A woman in St. Louis having been badly marked by the small-pox, her husband became ashamed of her, and inducing her to cross the Mississippi, under the pretence of accompanying her to a Southern State, he put her on the train, and when it started he pretended to go into another car to look for a friend, and, jumping off, deserted her. When she got back to St. Louis, several days afterward, he could not be found.

A Singular Accident.—Martin Deneef, while at work at Mitteneague, Mass., on the 4th of March, felt something strike his eye directly after a blast. He supposed it to be merely a flesh wound, and had it dressed accordingly; but on the 13th a Springfield oculist took from his eye a large pebble, which had passed through the eyelid and lodged in the ball of the eye, where it had remained nine days without being discovered. The sight was destroyed.

A visitor to the Supreme Court of the United States, at Washington, speaks of it as the most dignified tribunal in the country, notwithstanding he has seen one of the judges eat an apple with great gusto while seated on the bench, and another partake of molasses candy, and after the repast, lick every one of his ten fingers with great satisfaction.

A very careful bridegroom, in Cleveland, kept the wedding ring in his mouth during the first part of the ceremony, so that he could find it when the right time arrived. He mumbled the responses all right till the minister winked at him, as a hint to produce the ring, when, in his nervousness, he swallowed it.

According to the returns of the last census, there are four thousand eight hundred and forty-four daily and weekly papers published in the United States, and their aggregate circulation is thirteen million one hundred and ninety-eight thousand two hundred and ninety.

A gentleman living in Nottingham, N. H., is reported to have been poisoned by some postage stamps which were sent to him in a letter from this city, requesting an immediate answer. This is a warning not to touch one's tongue to postage stamps that come from strangers.

A widow lady in Louisville, Ky., has buried five husbands; the last of whom, previous to his death, had buried as many wives. That was a close contest; but she proved too much for him. She has another chance, at least.

A citizen of Fairfield, Vt., twenty-five years of age, got drunk on one of the last cold days they had in that region, and wandering off upon a pond was so badly frozen that he lived but a few hours after being found and taken home.

A farmer living near Decatur, Ill., is said to have acquired the reputation of being a very mean man, because he discharges his hands every Saturday night, and then charges them for board and lodging over Sunday.

A twelve-year-old son of a physician in Springfield, while amusing himself with a small pistol on Friday afternoon of last week, accidentally discharged it in his face, causing a painful and possibly a fatal wound.

The gales this season are pronounced by seafaring men as the most severe that have been encountered for years; much damage has been inflicted on shipping, and tales of suffering and disaster are frequent.

An old lady in Wisconsin is said to have done all her family sewing, for thirty years, with a single paper of needles, presented to her on her wedding-day, and the supply is not yet exhausted.

The death is announced, at Allegheny City, Pa., of General Hambright, who served through the war of 1812, and was very near a hundred years old.

A shocking accident, the result of an overdose of laughing gas, resulting in the death of a lady, recently occurred at a dentist's office in this city.

They recently had an earthquake shock in Savannah, and the sea rose on Tybee Island, in the harbor, to a great height.

A little boy of Quincy, Ill., drank a bottleful of earache medicine, and died in thirty minutes.

THE OLD CLOCK'S VOICE.

BY CALEB DUNN.

Against the wall the old clock stands,
Its hands are red with rust;
And its pendulum sways through a dusky haze
Of cobwebs robed in dust.
Over a hundred years ago,
With measured swing and motion slow,
This clock began to mark time's flow.

Many a one, in days gone by,
Who gazed upon its face,
Now sleeps where the breeze through the tremulous trees
Makes musical the place;
Yet, as if it were an immortal thing,
The old clock still keeps up its swing,
And counts the hours as they take wing.

Oft in the stormy winter time,
While gathered around the hearth,
The young and the old, secure from the cold,
Make most of the hour of mirth.
Above the ringing laughter's chime
Is heard the old clock's steady rhyme,
Weaving the song of passing time.

And when the summer days come round,
And the birds sing in the trees,
While the breath of flowers, called forth by showers,
Sweeten the kind south breeze,
Mingled with sound of bird and bee,
And cheery laughter of infancy,
The old clock's voice sings merrily.

All seasons through that voice is heard,
Through fortune and through ill,
Whether fate be fair, or the dregs of care
Life's fullest measure fill;
To note the moments as they fly,
The hours that come, the hours that die,
The old clock stands there faithfully.

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BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XCVII.

A VERY DESPERATE GAME.

> I have set my life upon a cast,
> And I will stand the hazard of the die.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

Craven Kyte, the infatuated and doomed instrument and victim of a cruel and remorseless woman, returned to Wendover and resumed his place in Bastiennello's establishment, where he culpably neglected his business, and lived only on the thought of receiving her daily letters and of soon returning to Richmond to be blessed by her promised hand in marriage.

Every morning he was the first man at the post-office, waiting eagerly, impatiently, for the arrival and opening of the mail.

And he was never disappointed of receiving her letter, and—never satisfied with its contents.

Every letter was in itself something of a mortification to him, containing no expression of confidence or affection, no word by which any one might suspect that the correspondent was writing to one she loved and trusted, much less to her betrothed husband.

Every letter began and ended in the most polite and formal manner; never alluded to the matrimonial intentions between the correspondents, but treated only of church services, Sunday-schools, sewing circles, and missionary matters, until the young man, famishing for a word of affection, with pardonable selfishness, sighed forth:

"She is a saint; but oh, I wish she was a little less devoted to the heathen, and all that, and a little more affectionate to me."

But the instant afterward he blamed himself for egotism, and consoled himself by saying:

"She always told me that, however much she loved, she would never write love-letters, as they *might* possibly fall into the hands of irreverent and scoffing people who would make a mockery of the writer. It is a far-fetched idea; but still it is *her* idea, and I must submit. It will all be right when I go to Richmond and claim her darling hand."

And the thought of this would fill him with such ecstasy that he would long to tell some one, his partner especially, that he was the happiest man on earth, for he was to be married in a week to the loveliest woman in the world. But he was bound by his promise to keep his engagement, as well as all other of his relations with the beautiful widow, a profound secret. And though the poor fellow *was* a fool, he was an *honorable* fool, and held his pledged word sacred.

Every letter that came to him also contained another letter, to which it never referred by written word. This inclosed letter was sealed in an envelope bearing the initial "L" embossed upon its flap. And it was directed to "Mrs. Mary Grey, Old Crane Manor House, Richmond."

Craven Kyte would gaze at this mysterious letter in the utmost confusion and obscurity of mind.

"Now, why in the world does she write a letter and direct it to *herself*, and send it to me to post privately, by night, at the Wendover post-office? And why did she give me only verbal instructions about it? And why does she avoid even alluding to it in her letter to me? Why is the envelope stamped with the letter L? And why, O why does the handwriting so closely resemble that of Mr. Lytton?" he inquired of himself, as his eyes devoured the superscription of the letter.

"I cannot tell," he sighed. "It is too deep for my fathoming. I give it up. I must blindly do her bidding, trusting in her implicitly, as I do, and as I will."

Then, following her verbal instructions given him, in Richmond, in regard to these mysterious letters, he put it away until dark, and then stole out and dropped it secretly into the night box at the post-office.

Five days passed, in which he received and re-mailed three of these inexplicable documents.

Then on Saturday morning Bastiennello, the head of his firm, returned to Wendover, and resumed the control of his business.

On the evening of the same day a van arrived from Blue Cliff Hall, bringing the heavy baggage of Mr. Alden Lytton, to be deposited at the railway station and left until Monday morning, when the owner intended to start for Richmond by the earliest train.

When Craven Kyte heard this, he went straight to his principal and claimed his promised leave of absence.

"Why, Kyte, you are in a tremendous hurry. Here I have not been back twelve hours and you want to be off," said Bastiennello, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"It is a case of necessity, sir, believe me," pleaded Craven Kyte.

"And this is Saturday night, the busiest time in the whole week," complained Bastiennello.

"Well, sir, you will not keep open after twelve, will you?"

"Certainly not after *eleven*."

"Nor will you need my services after that hour."

"Of course not."

"Then that will enable me to serve here as usual until the hour of closing, and then give me time to catch the midnight train to Richmond."

"Oh, well, if you can do that, it will all be right, and I can have no objection to your going to-night," said Bastiennello.

And so the affair was concluded.

The great village bazaar closed at eleven that night.

As soon as he had put up the last shutter, Craven Kyte rushed off to his humble lodgings, stuffed a carpet bag full of needed clothing and hurried to the railway station to catch the train.

It came thundering along in due time, and caught up the waiting victim and whirled him along on his road to ruin, as far as Richmond, where it dropped him.

It was nearly eleven o'clock in the morning, and all the church bells were ringing, when the train ran in to the station.

Craven Kyte, carpet bag in hand, rushed for the gentleman's dressing-room nearest the station, hastily washed his face, combed his hair, brushed his clothes, put on a clean collar and bosom piece, and fresh gloves, and hurried off to old St. John's Church, which he thought the most likely place on that Sunday forenoon to meet Mary Grey.

The service was more than half over when he reached the church, but he slipped in and seated himself quietly on one of the back seats near the door, and looked all over the heads of the seated congregation, to see if he could discover his beloved in the crowd.

Yes, there she was, in a front pew of the middle aisle, immediately under the pulpit.

To be sure he could only see the back of her head and shoulders, but he felt that he could not be mistaken.

And from that moment he paid but little attention to the service.

Do not mistake the poor soul. He was not impious. He had been religiously brought up in the family of the late Governor Cavendish. He was accustomed to be devout during divine worship. And on this occasion he wrestled with Satan—that is, with himself—and tried to fix his mind in succession on anthems, psalms, collects and sermon. All to little purpose. His mind went with his eyes toward Mary Grey.

And even when he closed those offending orbs, he still found her image in his mind.

At length the sermon was finished, and the benediction pronounced.

The congregation began to move out.

Craven Kyte went out among the first, and placed himself just outside the gate to wait until his adored should pass by.

In a continued stream the congregation poured forth out of the church until nearly all had passed out, but still he did not see Mary Grey.

In truth that popularity seeking beauty was lingering to bestow her sweet smile and honeyed words upon "all and sundry" who would give her the opportunity.

At length, among the very last to issue from the church was Mrs. Grey.

She came out chatting demurely with a group of her friends.

Craven Kyte made a single step toward her, with the intention of speaking; but seeing that she did not notice him, and feeling abashed by the presence of strangers about her, he withdrew again, and contented himself with following at a short distance until he saw her separate herself from the group and turn down a by-street.

Then he quickened his footsteps, turned down the same street, and joined her.

At the same instant she looked back upon him with a smile, saying:

"You clever boy! how good and wise of you to refrain from speaking to me before so many strangers. Now what is the news?"

"The news is— Oh, my dear, dearest, dearest Mary! I am so delighted to meet you!" he exclaimed, breaking suddenly off from his intended communications.

"So am I to see you, darling. But that is no news. Come, this is a quiet street, and leads out of the city. Let us walk on, and as we walk you can tell me all the news," she said smilingly, resting her delicate hand on his arm.

"I can tell you nothing—nothing yet, but that I love you! I love you!" he fervently breathed, as he drew her arm within his own and pressed her hand to his bosom.

"And I love you," she murmured, in the lowest, sweetest music. And then, after a moment's pause, she added gayly, "And now tell me what has brought you here so suddenly."

"Did I not promise you that I would be in Richmond this Sunday morning in time to attend you to church?"

"Yes, you did, but—"

"Well, I could not get in so early as I intended because I came on by the train that leaves Wendover at midnight. So I did not reach the city until nearly noon to-day. However, if I was not in time to attend you *to* church, I was in time to attend you *from* church. So I kept my promise tolerably well."

"Yes; but, my dear friend, I particularly requested that you would wait at Wendover and watch certain events, and not come to Richmond until something had happened or was about to happen."

"Well then?"

"You gave me your word that you would do as I directed you."

"Yes, certainly I did."

"Then, seeing you here, I am to presume that all the conditions of your engagement have been fulfilled."

"Yes, they have, dear lady mine."

"First, then, as you were not to come here until Mr. Alden Lytton was about to start or had started for this place, why, I am to presume, by seeing you here, that Mr. Lytton is either present in the city or on his way here."

"Mr. Lytton will leave Wendover for Richmond by the earliest train to-morrow. He will be here to-morrow evening," said Craven Kyte gravely.

"You are absolutely sure of this?" inquired Mrs. Grey.

"As sure of it as any one can be of any future event. His heavy baggage came over from Blue Cliff Hall yesterday evening, and was left at the station to be ready for transportation on Monday morning, when Mr. Lytton intended to take the earliest train for this city."

"Then there can be no mistake," said Mary Grey.

"None whatever, I think."

"You say you have fulfilled all the conditions of our engagement?"

"Yes, dearest, I have indeed."

"How about those letters I inclosed to you to be re-mailed?"

"I received them all, and re-mailed them all. Did you get them? You never acknowledged the receipt of one of them, however," said Craven Kyte thoughtfully.

"I got them all safe. There was no use in acknowledging them by letter, as I expected to see you so soon, and could acknowledge them so much better by word of mouth. But that is not exactly what I meant by my question, darling. Of course I knew without being told that you had re-mailed all those letters, as I had received them all."

"Then what was it you wished me to tell you, dearest Mary? Ask me plainly. I will tell you anything in the world that I know."

"Only this: Did you post those letters with great secrecy, taking extreme care that no one saw you do it?"

"My dearest, I took such care that I waited until the dead of night, when no one was abroad in the village, and I stole forth then, and all unseen dropped the letters into the night box."

"You darling! How good you are! What shall I ever do to repay you?" exclaimed the traitress, with well-acted enthusiasm.

"Only love me! Only love me! That will richly repay me for all! Ah! only love me! Only love me truly, and I will die for you if necessary," fervently breathed the poor, doomed young man, fondly gazing upon her, who, to gain her own diabolical end, was almost putting his neck into a halter.

"You foolish darling! Why, you would break my heart by dying! You can only make me happy by living for me," she said, with a smile.

"I would live for you, die for you, suffer for you, sin for you—do anything for you, bear anything for you, be anything for you!" he burst forth, in a fervor of devotion.

"There, there, dearest! I know you would. I know it all. But now tell me: Have you kept our engagement a profound secret from every human being, as I requested you to do?"

"Yes, yes, a profound secret from every human being, on my sacred word and honor! Although it was hard to do that. For as I walked up and down the streets of Wendover, feeling so happy, so happy, that I am sure I must have looked perfectly wild, as the people stared at me so suspiciously, I could scarcely help embracing all my friends, and saying to them, 'Congratulate me, for I am engaged to the loveliest woman in the world, and I am the happiest man on earth!' But I kept the secret."

"You mad boy! You love too fast to love long, I doubt. After a month or two of married life, you will grow tired of me, I fear," said Mary Grey, with mock gravity.

"Tired of you! Tired of Heaven! Oh, no, no, no!" he burst forth ardently.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

THE HAUNTED COTTAGE.

She suddenly brought him down to the earth with a homely remark.

"*I* am tired of walking. And here is a vacant house placarded 'To Let,' with a nice long porch in front. Come, let us go in and sit down on one of the benches and rest."

And she drew him toward the little gate that led into the yard in front of the house.

It was a rustic two story frame cottage, with a long porch in front, all overgrown with honeysuckles, clematis, woodbine and wild roses.

They went in together and sat down on the porch, under the shadow of the blooming and fragrant vines.

Then she turned and looked at him attentively for the first time since they met at the church.

"*You* look tired," she said, with alluring tenderness. "You look more exhausted than *I* feel. And that is saying a great deal, for I am quite out of breath."

"I am grieved that you feel so, dearest! It was selfish and thoughtless in me to keep you walking so long," said Craven, compunctiously.

"Oh, it is nothing! But about yourself. You really look quite prostrated."

"Do I, dearest? I am not conscious of fatigue. Though indeed I should never be conscious of that by your dear side."

"Now tell the truth," she said, again bringing him down from his flights. "Have you had your breakfast this morning?"

"Breakfast? I—don't remember," he said, with a perplexed air.

"Come to your senses, and answer me directly. What have you taken this morning?" she demanded, with a pretty air of authority.

"I— Let me see. I believe I bought a package of lemon drops from a boy that was selling them in the cars. I—I believe I have got some of them left yet," he said, hesitating, and drawing from his pocket one of those little white packets of candy so commonly sold on the train.

Mary Grey burst into a peal of soft, silvery laughter as she took them, and said:

"An ounce of lemon drops and nothing else for breakfast! Oh, Cupid, god of love, and Hebe, goddess of health, look here, and settle it between you!"

"But I do not feel hungry. It is food enough for me to sit here and feast upon the sight of your face, your beautiful face!"

"You frenzied boy! I see that I must take care of you. Come, now that we have recovered our breath, we will go on a little further to a nice, quiet, suburban inn, kept by an old maid. I have never been there myself, but I have seen it, in driving by with the Rector's family. It is such a nice place that the school children go there to have picnic parties in the grounds. We will go and engage a parlor, and have a quiet little breakfast or dinner, which ever you may please, for it shall combine the luxuries of both. Now will you go?" said Mary Grey, rising from her shady seat.

"Of course, if you wish me to do so; but indeed I do not need anything."

"But I *do*; for I breakfasted at seven o'clock this morning, before going to the Sunday-school. It is now one o'clock. I have been fasting six hours, and as I intend to spend the most of the day with you, I shall miss our luncheon at home; for you see we are deadly fashionable at the Miss Cranes. We lunch at two and dine at six. So come along."

Craven Kyte arose and gave her his arm, and they walked on together till they reached the little cottage, half farm-house, half hotel, that was so well kept by the nice old maiden hostess.

The good woman looked rather surprised to see Sunday visitors walk into her house.

But Mary Grey, prayer-book ostentatiously in hand, took her aside out of the hearing of Craven Kyte, and explained:

"I and my brother walked in from the country to attend church this morning. We have a carriage and might have ridden, only we do not think it is right to make the horses work on Sunday; do you?"

"No, Miss, I candidly don't; and that's a fact," replied the good creature.

"Mrs.," amended Mary Grey, with a smile.

"'Mrs.' of course. I beg your pardon, ma'am, but you looked so young, and I may say childish, and I didn't notice the widow's cap before," apologized the hostess.

"Well, as we had no friends in the town—no one with whom we could stop to dinner—I and my brother set out to walk home again. He is an invalid, and is quite exhausted with fasting and fatigue. So perhaps, under the circumstances, you would not mind letting us have a parlor to rest in, and a little dinner."

"Of course not, ma'am; for under *such* circumstances it is clearly my duty to entertain you," answered the good soul, who, under no possible circumstances, would have been false to her ideas of right.

"You are very kind. I thank you very much," said Mary Grey sweetly.

"Here is a room at your and your brother's disposal, ma'am. No one will intrude upon you here," said the hostess, opening a door that led into a neat back parlor, whose windows overlooked the garden and orchard attached to the house.

"Come," said Mary Grey, beckoning to her companion.

"Dear me! I never saw a brother and sister look so much alike as you two do," remarked the hostess admiringly, as she showed them into the back parlor.

She left them, promising to send in a nice dinner.

"And coffee with it, if you please," added Mary Grey, as the landlady went out.

"Yes, certainly, ma'am, if you wish it," she answered as she disappeared.

Mary Grey went to the back window and looked out upon the pleasant garden, verdant and blooming with shrubs, rose bushes and flowers.

Craven Kyte joined her.

"Did you hear that old lady call us brother and sister?" inquired the young man.

"Yes," answered Mary Grey, with her false smile. "But I did not think it necessary to set her right."

"And she said we looked so much alike," smiled Craven.

"We have both dark hair and dark eyes. And we are both rather thin in flesh. That is the beginning and the ending of the likeness. And her imagination did the rest," explained Mary Grey.

They were interrupted by a pretty mulatto girl, who came in to lay the cloth for dinner.

And this girl continued to flit in and out of the room, bringing the various articles of the service, until, on one of her temporary absences, Craven Kyte exclaimed:

"I would rather have sat and fasted with you under that pretty porch of the old road-side empty house than sit at a feast here, with that girl always running in and out to interrupt us."

"Never mind, dear. As soon as we get something to eat we will go," said Mary Grey, with her sweet, false smile.

In a reasonable time a dainty little dinner was placed upon the table, consisting of broiled chickens, green corn, asparagus and mashed potatoes, with fragrant coffee for a beverage, and peaches and cream for dessert.

When they had partaken of this, and had rested a while, Craven Kyte went out and paid the bill. And Mary Grey again drew the landlady aside, out of hearing of her companion, and said:

"We are so much rested and refreshed by your admirable hospitality, that my brother and myself think we shall walk back to town and attend afternoon service."

The good hostess smiled approval, but expressed a hope that they would not overdo themselves.

Mary Grey smiled and took leave, and walked off with her captive.

They went on until they came in front of the vacant house with the vine-clad porch.

"Come, won't you rest here a little while?" inquired Craven Kyte, laying his hand upon the latch of the gate.

"Yes, for a little while only," said Mary Grey, consulting her watch. "It is now half-past three o'clock, and service commences at half-past four. And I *must* be at church in time for the commencement of the service. You will go to church with me, of course," she added.

"Of course," answered Craven Kyte emphatically.

"I am sorry that I cannot ask you to sit with me; but the fact is, I have only one seat that I can call my own in a crowded pew, belonging to the Blairs. But you can walk with me to church, and join me again after the service," exclaimed Mary Grey.

"I should so much like to sit by your side," said poor Craven, with a disappointed look.

"Don't you see, my dear, it is quite impossible? The service, however, is short, and I will join you immediately after it."

And as they talked they went in and sat down on the porch.

"This is a pretty little old-fashioned cottage. Don't you think so?" inquired the beauty, as they looked around them.

"Very pretty," agreed her victim, who would equally have agreed to anything she might have proposed.

"Look! what a fine luxuriant garden it has behind it, all growing wild with neglect."

"Yes."

"And the orchard back of that! See the trees bending under their loads of ripening apples or peaches."

"Yes. It's a wonder the boys don't go in and steal them."

"No boy would enter there, for love or money."

"Why?"

"Because this is the house in which Barnes killed his wife and child, in a fit of insane jealousy, and the place has the terrible reputation of being haunted."

"Oh!"

"Yes; it is said that the ghost of a weeping woman, carrying a weeping child in her arms, is seen to wander through garden and orchard at all hours of the night, or to come in and look over the beds of the sleepers in the house, if any are found courageous enough to sleep there."

"Oh! and that is the reason, I suppose, that the house remains untenanted," said Craven Kyte.

"Yes, that is the reason why the house, pleasant and attractive as it looks, remains untenanted; and why the garden and orchard with their wealth of flowers and fruit remain untouched by trespassers," said Mrs. Grey.

"It is a pity such a pretty place should be so abandoned," mused the young man.

"It is. But, you see, family after family took it, and tried to live in it in vain. No family could stay longer than a week. It has now been untenanted for more than a year. I have heard that the owner offers to rent it for the paltry sum of fifty dollars a year."

"For this delightful house!"

"For this haunted house, you mean," said Mrs. Grey.

"Oh, nonsense! I beg your forgiveness, my dearest, I did not mean that for *you*, but for the gabies that believe in ghosts," said Craven Kyte.

"Then *you* do not believe in ghosts?"

"I!"

"Well, I thought you did not. In fact, I knew you did not. Now I want you to do something to please me," said the siren, laying her soft hand upon his shoulder.

"Anything in this world, you know I will do to please you."

CHAPTER XCIX.

WHAT SHE WANTED HIM TO DO.

"Well, I want you to rent this house."

Craven Kyte started with surprise, and looked at the speaker.

She went on, however, regardless of his astonishment.

"And I want you to purchase furniture enough to fit up one room for yourself; and I want you to do that the first thing to-morrow. And I want you to lodge here alone, while you remain in Richmond."

He still stared at her in amazement, but with no sign of a wish to disobey her strange commands.

She went on with her instructions.

"You can walk into the city, and take your meals at any restaurant you please, but you must lodge here alone, while you stay in the city."

"I will do so," he answered earnestly, as he recovered the use of his tongue—"I will do anything you tell me. I am entirely under your orders."

"You are the best fellow in the whole world, and I love the very ground you walk on!" exclaimed the traitress warmly.

He grasped her hand convulsively and pressed it to his lips, and then waited her further directions.

"To reward you, I will come out here every morning and spend the whole day with you."

"Oh, that will be heavenly! I should be willing to live in a cave, on such delightful conditions."

"But mind, my dearest one, you must not come to see me at my boarding-house, or try to meet me, or to speak to me, after to-day, anywhere where I am known," added Mrs. Grey gravely.

"Oh, that seems very hard!" sighed the victim, with a look of grief, almost of suspicion.

"Why should it seem hard, when I tell you that I will come out here every morning to spend the whole day with you?" inquired Mrs. Grey.

"But why, then, can I not go home with you, and spend the whole evening in your company at your boarding-house?" pleaded the poor fellow.

"Because we should have no comfort at all in a whole parlor full of company, as there is at the Miss Cranes every evening. And because we should be talked about in that gossipping boarding-house circle. And finally because I should much rather stay with you alone here in this house, where there is no one to criticize us, as late every evening as I possibly can, and let you walk home with me and leave me at the door at bed-time. Now, don't you think mine the better plan?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, if you really will spend the evenings with me also."

"Why, certainly I will. And now let us walk on to church. And mind, you must leave me at the church door and find a seat for yourself, while I go to mine. After church I will come out here with you again, and sit with you all the evening. I have no doubt the good woman at the rustic inn down the road will give us tea, as she gave us dinner," said the beauty, as she arose and slipped her hand within her companion's arm.

They left the house together and walked on to the church.

And the programme for the afternoon and evening was carried on according to the beautiful schemer's arrangement.

After the services were concluded, they walked out to the suburban inn, where the simple-minded hostess willingly agreed to furnish tea for such a pious church-going brother and sister.

And when they had had this tea, Mary Grey, to beguile the landlady, took her willing captive for a walk further out toward the country; and then returning by a roundabout route, came to the vacant road-side cottage, where, as the September evening was very warm, they sat under the vine-clad porch until ten o'clock.

Then they walked back to the town together.

Craven Kyte took Mary Grey to the gate of her boarding-house, where, as the place was silent and deserted, they paused [illegible] a few last words.

"Mind—the first thing you do to-morrow morning will be to go and find the owner of the haunted house and rent it from him," said the widow.

"Yes," answered her white slave.

"And the next thing you do will be to go and buy the furniture necessary to fit up one room for yourself, and have it taken out there and arranged."

"Yes," he answered again, very submissively.

"That will take you nearly all day, I think."

"I will hurry through the business as fast as I can, so that I may see you the sooner. When can I see you to-morrow?" he pleaded.

"At seven o'clock to-morrow evening wait for me at the haunted house. I will come and stay with you there until eleven."

"Oh, that is so long to wait! May I not see you sooner?"

"Impossible! I have a sacred duty to do to-morrow that will engage me all day. But you too will be busy. And we can look forward all day to our meeting in the evening. And after to-morrow we can meet every morning, and spend the whole day together," said the traitress sweetly.

"I suppose I must be content," sighed the victim.

"Now good-night, dear. And good-bye until to-morrow night," murmured the siren, as she gave her lover a Judas kiss and dismissed him.

Mary Grey hurried into the drawing-room, where the Miss Cranes were still sitting up.

"My dear Mrs. Grey, we feared that something had happened to you," said the elder Miss Crane.

"Oh, no. I went to see one of my Sunday-school pupils whom I missed from my class, and whom upon inquiry I found to be ill at home. I have spent the whole day with the sick child, except the hours spent at church. And I must go to see her again to-morrow morning," said the widow, with a patient smile.

"How good you are!" murmered Miss Crane.

Mary Grey shook her head deprecatingly, bowed good-night to the slim sisters, and went up stairs to her own room.

Early the next morning Mary Grey, telling her hostesses that she was then going to sit with the sick child, left the old Manor house and walked rapidly to the railway station, and took a ticket for Forestville, a village about twenty miles from the city, on the Richmond and Wendover Railroad.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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INSUFFICIENT EFFECTS.

"Some few years ago," said Mr. Henry, "I contrived to cheat a man out of one hundred and ten pounds sterling, and I never was better pleased in my life."

We were all very much astonished to hear a respectable and wealthy English merchant speak in this way, and I suppose our looks betrayed what we felt, for our friend immediately added, by way of explanation:

"Perhaps I hardly use a proper word when I say I 'cheated' the man, for what I did does not certainly deserve such a term. In fact, I only prevented him from cheating me. But I will explain to you all about the matter.

"About fifteen years ago I had somewhat to do in the way of business with a man named Morris. He was a very plausible fellow, and one who would be apt to overreach any one with whom he had anything to do. He came one day to my office and gave an order for goods to a small amount. These were sent and paid for, and other orders followed from time to time, until he had acquired a certain degree of credit. He then began to pay for what he had with bills, which, although they would now appear to me to be for very insignificant amounts, were then of consequence, as I had not at that time long started in business, and that only in a small way.

"In the usual course I took from him two bills for £50 each, and one for £20, making £120 in all. These I believed at the time to be good; but when the day of payment had very nearly arrived, he persuaded me to give them up in exchange for a check upon the Union Bank, where he had a small current account. This check he asked me not to present until about a week after the day when the three bills which I had returned would have become due. His motive in doing this he explained by alleging that certain business difficulties, into particulars of which he then entered, were just at the time pressing rather awkwardly upon him. This I afterwards found was not true. The check was not dated, as it is illegal to pre-date a check upon a London banker; but I agreed when I took it, to add the date the same day I presented i[illegible] of course trusting to my honor not to pr[illegible] it before the time specified between us.

"After he had gone I began to hav[illegible] misgivings about the affair, for I recall[illegible]tain questionable things which I h[illegible]pened to hear about this Mr. Morri[illegible] blamed myself for being so readily pe[illegible] Besides which, as I stated, the sum i[illegible] was of consequence to me then.

"The day appointed arrived at las[illegible] I had several payments to make, I [illegible] check and sent it to the bank. It w[illegible] to my clerk again over the counte[illegible] words 'Insufficient effects' writte[illegible] You can guess how annoyed I was [illegible]

"I went immediately round to [illegible] where Mr. Morris did business, b[illegible] gone out. Again and again I eithe[illegible] clerk or called myself, but all to no [illegible] he was never to be found. Meanwh[illegible] greatly inconvenienced in making [illegible] own accounts, for I had depende[illegible] him, and I really began to feel n[illegible] annoyed, but angry. You will not w[illegible] at this when I tell you that I ha[illegible]ceived private information from a f[illegible] which convinced me that Morris was not [illegible]ing honestly toward me, and when I app[illegible] to him the only answer I could get was, t[illegible] he would see about it before long.

"It appeared, from what I now ascertaine[illegible] that at the time when the check was presented Morris still had money at the bank to the amount of about £30; but as of course this was not sufficient for the payment of £120, the check was returned as I have stated. Several times I learned from the same source that he had paid in small sums, so as to continue his account, but had always contrived that they should fall short of the amount owing to me. I resolved, however, not to be cheated in this way, but at the same time was perplexed what to do, as there were certain business reasons why I did not want to make the matter public, or proceed to extremities with my dishonest debtor. He was aware of this, and considering himself safe, probably only regretted that he had not incurred a still larger debt.

"At last I began to see my way out of the difficulty. The friend from whom I had obtained the information suggested a plan which, though it at first seemed to me rather doubtful, promised, he said, to fight Mr. Morris with his own weapons and turn the tables upon him. It was as follows:

"We ascertained privately that he had paid into the bank a certain sum which brought up his account to just £110, which was only £10 less than was necessary for the payment of my check. It was now too late to do anything that day, but we made our arrangements. The first thing the next morning I took my clerk with me and went round to the bank. The clerk entered and paid to Mr. Morris' account the sum of ten pounds *and one shilling*. This, added to the £110 already to his credit, made exactly the amount due to me, and one shilling over. I then myself went in and presented my check, which was of course paid. I thus outwitted Mr. Morris at his own game. My loss, besides the delay, was just £10 and one shilling, which I thought it better to sacrifice at once than to lose the whole sum. I do not know how Mr. Morris felt when he found that the balance at his banker's was only one shilling, but I have heard that since then his peculiar mode of doing business has entitled him to free quarters at the expense of his ungrateful country, and that he will not require a banking account for some years to come."

A. M.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 1872.

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The Income Tax—Its Hatefulness Admitted in England.

John Bright has written a letter recently, in which he says:

> "There is little real difference of opinion as to the odious and unfair character of the Income Tax."

Such is the language which the leading statesmen of Great Britain have almost uniformly held on this subject. They have hardly attempted to justify, or even to excuse the tax, except on the plea of necessity. For a long time it was known as the war tax, from its being levied temporarily, in consequence of the extraordinary expenditures attendant upon some war.

The frauds which have been perpetrated in England in making income returns have shocked the moral sense of the nation. The law has been stigmatized as a measure for the encouragement of perjury and fraud.

In this country the Income Tax has been followed by the same train of evils which have attended it in England. By its own limitation the law expires with the present assessment; but unless there be a decided manifestation of public sentiment against it, there is too much reason to apprehend its re-enactment.

Long Dresses Again.

Once more they seem to have come in fashion—the long dresses for sweeping the streets! A detestable fashion it is too, with nothing to recommend it, and with many and forcible reasons for its condemnation.

The silks and other costly materials worn out in mopping the sidewalks of Broadway and Fifth Avenue cost enough to keep hundreds of poor families from starvation and want.

But the waste attendant upon this custom is not the only or the greatest objection to it. A mop attached to the end of a dress, and orming a part of it, is wholly incompatible ith personal neatness. Is any lady willing ave it said that she is not neat?

is the duty of men to set their faces t this most disgusting fashion. They carry their opposition to the extent of to walk in the street even with their daughters, if they insist upon wear- s with trains to them only fit for a oom.

el's humps and all such things we ng with—albeit with an effort; but most earnestly, against the mop- in the street, especially unless a nger be hung on to the skirt along

A Generous Act.

> ye have done it unto one of the least ren, ye have done it unto me."

l of Mr. A. T. Stewart, that a e he notified the public authori- of small-pox which had occurred sidence. The sufferer was a do- had long resided in his family, unwilling to have her removed to l on Blackwell's Island. He prom- solate her on the upper story, or, if y, place the whole house at her dis-

is a little incident, and yet it will be with a thrill of delight all over the ry; for the knowledge of his immense th has extended everywhere, and he has very commonly reputed to be a hard- ted man. It was a spontaneous, genuine o kindness; and yet the record of it, sim- as it is, constitutes a monument to his emory more enduring than his marble pal- e, and with a foundation broader than his empstead Plains.

Cold-water Bathing.

There has been a discussion before the Massachusetts Legislature as to the propriety of compelling the children at the Blind Asylum to bathe daily in cold water. The *Watchman and Reflector* remarks:

> "The Cold-bathing at the Blind Asylum is under investigation at the State House, and we hope will be thoroughly examined and satisfactorily settled. Perhaps if each officer of the institution and each member of the committee should be subjected to the process for several consecutive mornings, they might better appreciate the feelings of those who complain of undue severity. There is nothing like 'knowing how it is yourself.'"

A Too Significant Name.—A Maryland paper publishes an advertisement of a farm "known by the name of *Philip's Hard Fortune*." Presuming that a farm that was a hard fortune to Philip might prove a hard fortune to others, we should think this would be an unsalable place.

A Handsome Cane.—We have received a present of a very handsome cane from Mr. Collins Acres, a farmer residing at Hermon, St. Lawrence county, New York. Mr. Acres appears to be a natural artist, for with only a file and a jackknife for tools, he has wrought, at the end of the handle, an eagle's head, and on the side of the cane, an excellent likeness of *Dexter*. Several months ago Mr. Acres called at our stable, and while there, spoke of a horse belonging to himself which had been lame four or five years. We advised him how to shoe him, and he is now well and sound. Mr. Acres forwards to us this cane as an embodiment of his thanks.

HOT CROSS BUNS.

In England, not on the Continent, hot cross buns are made, sold, and eaten extensively on Good Friday. There has been much speculation as to their origin. The cake is small, spiced, and marked with a cross. What is its origin? There seems reason to think it a part of that ancient system of which Easter itself is a relic. The marks of identification are these:

Baal or Bel was worshipped extensively in the East, and eventually in the West, including Britain. He was the Sun. His consort was Astarte, the Ishtar of Nineveh, the Eostora of the Germans: hence "Easter," which is peculiar as a word to the English race. Forty days of fasting in honor of the Sun have been kept by Pagans in Koordistan, by the Mexicans, by the ancient Egyptians, (see Wilkinson,) by some of the Greeks and Romans. Christianity in the sixth century accepted this, gave it a new name and signification, and what used to be a fast in honor of the Sun, beginning three days after the vernal equinox, became a Christian observance. The transition was made about 525 A. D. The calendar was readjusted; a struggle ensued, the British long refusing the Roman time; but at length the Chaldean time and usage prevailed. The egg was the Eastern symbol of fertility, and was dyed, ornamented, and presented to the goddess. It was also the old Druidical emblem; for they were of Chaldean origin. The Hindoos have a golden, and the Japanese a brazen, egg. Painted eggs have become in many places an Easter institution. So has the eating of eggs at Easter. So have, the *buns*. Bryant, in his Mythology, says, "One species of sacred bread which used to be offered to the gods was of great antiquity, and called *Boun*." Diogenes Laertius describes the offering made by Empedocles thus: "He offered one of the sacred cakes called *Boun*, which was made of fine flour and honey."

The prophet Jeremiah—44:19—says, "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, *to make cakes to the queen of heaven*." Astarte had "buns" in her honor fifteen hundred years before the Christian era.

Men who have studied this subject from opposite points of view have come to the same conclusion on it, such as the Rev. G. S. Faber, and Alexander Hyslop, in whose country (Scotland) the "buns" have no footing. "So," says the writer in the Book of Days, "people eating those hot cross buns little know what, in reality, they are about." The history however is curious, showing how little there is new under the sun, or the moon; how usages travel under various names over the earth; how the race is one, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding; and how people may think themselves exceptionally good, when they have only a little more ancient paganism than their neighbors. J. H.

Inconsistent Characteristics in Murderers.

Murderers are as frequently remarkable for timidity as for courage. One of the most cruel murders that we have ever heard of—the killing of an aged couple living by themselves in a country house, and perpetrated in the night time, with great deliberation, for the purpose of robbery—was committed by a weak-minded creature who had been noted all his life for being afraid to go out doors after dark. He was a brother of Hicks the pirate, who was afterward executed near this city.

A peculiarly tender-hearted individual—if we may believe his own description of himself—has just been convicted of murder in England. The following is his statement:

> "I could never kill anything. When I kept fowls I had them sent away to be killed, and when I kept a pig in the Forrest of Dean I absented myself while it was being killed."

And yet this man deliberately murdered his companion and room-mate, by cutting his head open with an axe, while he was sleeping in bed!

Six witnesses were called to prove the eccentricities of the prisoner; but it was conceded that he had been sane since he had been in jail—or *gaol*—as the English papers still continue to spell the word.

The justice who presided at the trial, in summing up, told the jury that the question they had to decide was, whether at the time the prisoner struck the deceased he knew he was doing wrong, and what was the consequence of the act.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty, accompanying it with a recommendation to mercy.

The defence of insanity has been pretty generally disregarded by English juries, of late.

The Diamond Fields in Africa.

A correspondent of the London *Times* gives some information, from personal observation, of the Diamond Fields in Africa. He says that the most satisfactory results have been obtained on an area of about twenty acres, known as the "New Rush," or "Colesburg Kopge." He says:

> "I believe that at least four-fifths of the diamonds are unearthed at this spot, and that when it is worked out, there will be a very sensible diminution in both quantity and value. An equally prolific 'new rush' may, of course, be discovered, but the chances seem to be against it; at all events, this is the general opinion."

He states that before the discovery of this New Rush, digging for diamonds was a very speculative employment, and that a very large proportion of those engaged in it had not found sufficient to pay their expenses. From inquiry among them, it was ascertained that not more than one in twenty was satisfied with the employment.

A Huge Skeleton.

The following description is given of a skeleton recently found at Otisville, Orange county, N. Y.:

> "The upper jaw and main portion of the head weighs 500 pounds, and measures 3 feet 7 inches across the top. There are four teeth in the upper jaw, two on each side. The back teeth extend seven inches along the jawbone, and are four inches across. The openings where the tusks have been are three feet and eight inches deep, and eight inches in circumference. The vertebræ was found in forty pieces, but lying altogether, while the pelvis was taken out whole and uninjured. The channel where the spinal cords lay when the monster was alive is five inches in circumference. Among the missing bones are the tusks, the lower jawbone, and those of the hind legs. One bone of a leg that has been found weighs alone over 350 pounds. When the skeleton is reconstructed it will measure fourteen feet from the bottom of its feet to the top of its head, and over twenty-five feet from head to tail.
>
> "A singular incident connected with the skeleton is, that in its stomach was found a quantity of undigested matter. Among it were fresh looking and very large leaves, of odd form, and blades of strange grass, of extreme length, varying from an inch to three inches in width, and looking as if freshly cropped from the earth."

It is evident that this part of the world was once inhabited by animals very different from those to be found here now. The museum at Albany contains a number of specimens of these monsters which have been exhumed in different parts of the State.

—To the *Atcheson Champion* and numerous other journals: When you copy our articles, is it not just as easy to give credit to the *New York Ledger* as to "*Exchange*?"

BORROWING.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"From him that would borrow, turn not thou away." Are we to construe this literally, or may we use discretion in the matter?

No one can doubt that an *obliging* spirit is inculcated; that one ought not to regard his own good alone, in his various possessions and implements. But really, ought we to lend to *every one?* or everything? or in spite of the lessons of experience? A hoe, a spade, an axe, a wheelbarrow; or a little tea, or sugar, or flour; or a common book, or newspaper—these are fair subjects for borrowing. But your spectacles, your Sunday coat, or silk dress; your new china coffee-cup, or superb book; a picture or delicate engraving; a new microscope, or an aquarium; your baby, or other like valuables—are you bound to lend these?

There is a question for you, Mr. Bonner! Are we bound by the command to a literal fulfilment? For, if we *are*, I should like to borrow a pair of horses, a fact which I have heretofore, in a variety of ways, hinted, and hinted again, but with no results of a satisfactory nature.

But I am growing heterodox—perhaps not in doctrine, but in casuistry. I am tired of lending to those who never return; to those who return a fine book soiled and spoiled, with the affable explanation, that "the child had it to play with, and touched it a little!" No—it is not I that am tired, after all; for, considering the circumstances, I have escaped marvellously. It is true that some one has the first volume of Burke's Works, and that Stewart's Athens, which I lent to an artist, was walked off with to Cincinnati, and has never come back—(what was his name?—let me see!—well, I'll find out and let you know)—but I flatter myself that I have borrowed full as much and more, and that the case is about even.

But one thing I cannot and will not stand. There is a member of a great publishing house in New York who says and circulates that I borrowed that distinguished traveller and very clever fellow, De Chaillu's, *umbrella*, and did not return it on demand! It was alleged to be the umbrella that he had taken with him around the world: with which he had kept the Kopts of Egypt from tanning; had preserved salamanders from a sunstroke; had sheltered ducks and frogs in Africa from getting wet; and with which, in Norway and Sweden, he had played fast and loose with the winds.

Now this whole charge I deny. That I brought off my own umbrella safely from that establishment has always been a matter of grateful wonder to me. But that I bagged the well-worn and world-renowned umbrella of the African traveller I do aver is not in accord with the truth of history.

Not that I feel above taking a good umbrella—indeed, a score would not repay the number lent and not returned. I do not object to borrowing, in the abstract. When a boy, I frequently borrowed doughnuts and gingerbread, and bits of pie and sugar, with now and then a morsel of jelly; but it was all in the family—I never transcended the bounds of relationship.

I *may* have forgotten an apple or two, or a sly cherry that had no business to be hanging over the fence; but ten times the value of these I returned in throwing stones at the owner's pigs, or in corn fed to his geese—with a string and bit of paper fastened to the kernels.

On the whole, I feel unable to lay down any ethical rules in respect to borrowing. Cannot some of your correspondents throw some light upon it? Must I lend my poor things, and keep my nice ones to myself? Must I lend to forgetful persons? Is money among the things which one must lend on solicitation? Is it right to keep an axe very dull on purpose to lend? and a broken-down horse and a shackling wagon?

THE SERVANT QUESTION.

I am in the habit of receiving countless letters on every kind of topic, which invariably commence by saying, "You will doubtless be astonished to receive a letter from an entire stranger." As I am getting rather weary of this formula, I would here say, that I should be much more astonished to receive a letter from a person who was not "an entire stranger." But waiving this point, many of those I get are upon the much ventilated, but very little understood "servant question." Now, as to this whole subject, which is a perfect muddle from beginning to end—from our mis-called Intelligence Offices to our drawing-rooms; from mistress to maid—I believe we are in a transition state with regard to it, and can only hold our breaths, in view of a revolution to which we are fast verging. Our present Intelligence Offices, where "characters" can be purchased for a dollar or so, can scarcely be of much value—Intelligence Offices where fees are taken from both mistress and maid, and the keepers of which, after having secured these fees, fold their hands for days and even weeks at a time, waiting "for girls to come in," quietly telling ladies who remonstrate at this delay, that "they have not yet heard of anybody;" also telling poor girls who are paying their board, the same story, that "they have not heard of a place."

Reformation has got to begin *here*. No unworthy or dishonest servant, who has proved herself incapable of the duties she has declared herself competent to perform, and has asked high wages for under these false pretences, and has properly been refused, on leaving, a recommendation from the lady she has swindled, should be able to *buy* one of any Intelligence Office claiming to be respectable.

Ladies also themselves should make it an invariable rule to speak the truth to each other, when called upon to know the "character" of servants who have been in their employ.

Change will and must be the order of the day, with all its disastrous results to both sides, until a better system than the present is inaugurated. What Solomon will inaugurate it, remains to be seen.

A "mass meeting" of ladies might be called, only that men so object to anything that squints toward being "strong-minded." Perhaps, as their coffee and roast beef are in peril, they might, for this once, be induced to overlook it. Who knows? Fanny Fern.

The Secret of Poverty.

The New York *Times* prints a complaining letter of a clerk out of place, and makes it the occasion of the following appropriate remarks:

> "But even in the case of our correspondent, we have little doubt that the universal faults of our young men have brought him, with thousands like him, to his present unfortunate condition. They spend on a small income as if they had a large one. There is no habit of economy with them. They forget that a few dollars saved every year will soon form a fund to keep the wolf out of the door. They have a contempt for petty savings. They eat their cake while they are young, and expect to have it when they are old. Their cigars and suppers and dress and excursions take what would have sheltered them in a rainy day, and then they blame Providence, or 'society' in general. Before their income is assured they marry, and their wives have the same habits. Silks and satins, carpets and pianos, soon eat away each year's surplus. With children, expenses increase, and no savings are behindhand. At length some chance throws them out of employment, and they stand with hunger and beggary staring them in the face. No 'practical' advisers can help, such persons. They have burnt both ends of the candle, and it is gone. They chose pleasure instead of frugality, and they have their reward."

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF ALEXIS, SON OF PETER THE GREAT, FOR HIGH TREASON.

Eudokhia Lapuklim, a noble Russian lady, the first wife of Peter the Great, contrived very soon after her marriage to inspire her husband with aversion.

The feeling thus created in the heart of Peter only waited a fitting occasion to be resolved into expression. The revolt of the Strelitz, which we have already recorded, furnished him with the desired excuse. She was banished from court, and held in honorable imprisonment.

Insurrections broke out in various parts of the empire, but Peter was not to be intimidated.

Eighty of the Strelitz who had taken part in the disturbances were brought from Asoph to Moscow in chains, and their heads struck off by the hand of the Czar, who seemed to find pleasure in acting the part of executioner.

This disgraceful scene took place in the great square of the capital, amid the applause of his terror-stricken subjects.

Undismayed by the failure of so many plots, a last conspiracy was entered into by the Strelitz to place Sophia upon the throne. Three of the officers prepared an address to the imprisoned Princess, inviting her to assume the crown, but the vigilant officers of the Czar discovered the authors of it, and they were hanged in front of her windows.

Peter had the cruelty to order the stiffened arm of one of the conspirators to be placed in her chamber, with the rebellious address clasped in its hand, as if in the act of presentation, and to remain there till it should moulder and fall to dust. This inhuman taunt broke the proud heart of Sophia, who became a vailed nun, under the name of Marpha, and died in 1704.

Then commenced the work of improvement: the national costume was changed for the European, and a navy built; arsenals were erected; roads and bridges appeared as if by enchantment. We have not space to chronicle the war of Peter with Sweden, the foundation of St. Petersburg, or his second travels in Europe; his marriage with Catherine, and her influence over his fickle heart, which to the last remained unshaken; her humble origin, and solemn coronation as Czarina, the Emperor himself walking before her as captain of her body-guard on the occasion; but come at once to the most tragic incident in the life of that remarkable man: the trial and execution of his son Alexis, and heir to the imperial crown.

Previous to this sad event, Peter, on the death of the Patriarch Adrian, had abolished the office of Patriarch—not openly or officially, but with his usual cunning and duplicity—first excusing himself from nominating a successor on the plea of business.

In the year 1721 he instituted a spiritual consistory, which fulfilled all the duties of the high office. The Czar himself presided.

On a petition being presented to him, praying him to appoint a Patriarch, he drew his sword, struck the table with it, and exclaimed, "Here is your Patriarch." From that moment the dignity, often so dangerous to the throne, was formally abolished.

It has never been revived.

Although the conduct of his first wife had greatly weaned his affection from her son Alexis, Peter attended carefully to the education of his heir, but all attempts to improve his mind and character proved abortive. He was naturally deceitful, brutal and cruel. The Czar had married him to a Princess of the house of Wolfenbuttel, who died under his ill-treatment, after giving birth to a son, on the 15th of November, 1715.

After this sad event, Peter wrote to his son a letter in the mixed language of remonstrance and menace—threatened that, unless he changed his life, he would deprive him of the succession.

"I would prefer," he added, "to transmit the crown to a stranger who merited it than to my own son, should he prove himself unworthy of it."

The Prince returned a brief reply, in which he renounced the succession. The birth of a half-brother by the Czarina Catherine had evidently alarmed him.

His father wrote a second letter of remonstrance, in which he recommended him either to reform or become a monk.

Alexis answered that he would enter a monastery; and Peter, believing such to be his real intention, set out on a journey to Germany. The infatuated Prince celebrated his departure by a banquet to his dissolute companions.

For seven months his father never heard from him. At last, losing patience, he summoned him to join him at Copenhagen. Alexis drew the necessary funds from Menzikoff, and fled to Vienna, where he threw himself on the protection of the Emperor Charles the Sixth. The measure of the Czar's wrath was full, but he dissembled and promised pardon if he would return. The minister Tolstoe bribed a friend of the unfortunate Prince to persuade him to return to Moscow, where he arrived the 13th of February, 1718.

From the day he entered the imperial city his doom was certain. The Czar summoned the members of the Senate, the Bayards, Privy Councillors, and superior clergy, to the palace.

Alexis, deprived of his sword, was led before them a prisoner.

Prostrating himself before his father, he placed a paper in his hands in which he confessed his errors, renounced the crown, and implored for mercy.

Peter, after recapitulating his crimes, solemnly deprived Alexis of the succession, which he declared should descend to his second son by the Czarina Catherine. He afterward conducted his prisoner to the cathedral, where the act of renunciation, and an oath to that effect, were administered, and copies of the proceedings transmitted to all the public authorities.

The wrath of his parent was still further excited, if that were possible, by the discovery of letters Alexis had written to the Senators, Archbishops and clergy, calling upon them not to abandon him *at present*. This correspondence had been treacherously intercepted by the Court of Austria, and transmitted to the Czar.

Witnesses deposed that the incautious Prince had boasted he would be placed upon the throne by the clergy, even against his will.

The brothers of the ex-Czarina, who were supposed to be implicated in the designs of their nephew, two Bishops, and numerous friends and companions of the Czarovitch, were decapitated, and their heads exposed upon a scaffold.

Peter's next step was to remove his son to St. Petersburg. As a father, as well as sovereign, the laws of Russia gave him an incontestible right over the life of his son.

In a solemn assembly of the Nobles, Senators and Generals of the Empire, the Czar, in a speech delivered with some dignity, accused Alexis of his many crimes. At its conclusion he hypocritically added:

"Should you decide that he deserves but a slight punishment, your decision will not be unwelcome to us. Be not influenced by the reflection that you are called upon to judge the son of your Sovereign, but act fearlessly, without respect to persons."

He also issued a similar address to the clergy, who cautiously replied that the affair came rather before the civil than the spiritual jurisdiction, and expressed their entire reliance on the wisdom and justice of the Czar.

On the fifth of July, the assembled Nobles, Senators and Generals unanimously condemned the unfortunate Alexis to death, submitting their sentence to the sovereign pleasure of the Czar.

Armed with this sanction, it was not long before the final act of the tragedy was completed. The Prince was removed from the court on the evening of the sixth of July. On the seventh, messages were sent to his father, saying that he was ill, and desired to see him. Attended by the principal officers of his court, Peter visited him, and took an affecting leave. In the evening, as his Majesty was about to visit him a second time, news arrived that he was dead.

Such was the official account by which Peter the Great attempted to justify this cruel treatment of his first-born son and heir, to the different courts of Europe. Of course it was accepted, but generally disbelieved.

The Rev. W. Cox asserts, in his work on Russia, that Alexis was beheaded by order of his father, and that Marshal Weyde performed the office of executioner. He also states, as his authority, a conversation between a second person and a court lady high in the confidence of the Czar and Czarina, who had sewed the head of the unfortunate Prince to his body.

The report that Peter first knouted and then beheaded his son with his own hand is too horrible to be believed.

The following account is from the memoirs of Mr. Bruce, formerly in the service of Russia:

> "After the last visit of the Czar to his son, Marshal Weyde came from the apartment, and ordered me to go to Mr. Bear, the druggist, whose shop was hard by, and tell him to make the potion *strong*, as the Prince was very ill.
>
> "When I delivered this message, Mr. Bear turned very pale, and appeared in great confusion, which very much surprised me. Meanwhile the Marshal himself came in, and reproved him for the delay, saying that his Highness had an attack of apoplexy.
>
> "The druggist delivered to the Marshal a silver cup filled with the potion. This the Marshal conveyed himself to the apartment of Alexis, staggering as he went like a drunken man.
>
> "The Prince expired that same afternoon."

If the above account is true, there is little doubt but that he was poisoned by the order of his father; but whatever the manner of his death, it has left a dark stain on the memory of Peter the Great.

OVER SEDGELY POND.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

The maple buds over yonder flush,
  Or is it sunset that glows beyond?
Nay, nay, the willows have turned to gold,
  And trail their whips over Sedgely pond.

The purple bars of the western sky
  Lattice dark the ruddy background o'er,
But crimson buds of the maple fall
  Upon the path to the garden door.

And yellow whips on the willow-tree
  Are tapping soft on the water's breast;
The bird that sang in the morning time,
  Sleeps now on her newly builded nest.

Trailing sweet arbutus sprays I kiss,
  Gift of the woods and the winter sun,
Gathered, may be, for their own sweet sake,
  Mayhap—for his. Nay, the dream is done.

Piping softly yonder, faint and far,
  From Sedgely pond and its rush-lined shore,
The first low "peep" of the frog I hear
  To-night. So I heard it once before.

Again I stand by the Woodside road,
  With the pale arbutus laden sweet;
Again I look at the sunset gate,
  The bars that lattice the golden street.

Again the whips of the willow sway,
  The faint low "peep" of the frog is heard,
Until the leaves of the bough I hold
  By a vibrant voice at my ear are stirred.

Then I see no more the sunset gate,
  Its shining street through its purple bars;
I see a face with a tawny beard,
  I see dark eyes like the winter stars.

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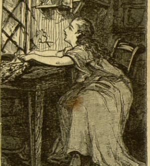


Now I sit alone. Let the door be shut,
  So I hear no sound over Sedgely pond,
Nor see the whips, for they cut me now,
  And the Woodside road whitens just beyond.

And the hand of Spring, through arbutus bloom,
  Holds up a draught of such bitter pain,
That I fling the fragrant chalice down,
  And turn to the faithful sky again.

Prospective Moving.

House hunting time again. Bills and rents both up together. Strangers investigating your cupboards, while other strangers frown as you humbly peep into theirs. What a miserable time! Then the awful prospect before you of moving-day and its attendant horrors; of broken furniture and china; of carpets that will not fit, and book-cases too broad for any recess; of the loss of the piano's right leg, and the right standard of the looking-glass of the walnut bureau; of a hole in the wall of the new house artfully concealed by a picture, and all the paper torn from the upper rooms by the "last party," who "went away mad on account of the raise in rent," and found revenge sweet, as the agent condescends to explain; of departing domestics, who scorn families who move, and of new arrivals, who pocket the tea-spoons, and all the small odds and ends, in the midst of the general chaos which has come again; of colds and headaches, and hurried meals, and general misery and extra expense. Satan surely invented moving; and when the millennium comes the angels will build a house for every child as soon as it is born, so that there shall be no letting of houses upon earth, and all shall be peace and happiness.

O for the old May-days, when dancing about the May-pole was the occupation of the anniversary. Now, if we dance about anything, it is the wreck of our *lares* and *penates*, and the horrible bills which all concerned want "settled immediately," as it is very natural they should, only the Old Adam in us rebels as we produce our pocket-books.

Besides, it always rains upon the first of May, in these degenerate days, whatever almanacs may say upon the subject. M. K. W.

Is it Necessary to have Two Consciences?

[From the Christian Watchman and Reflector.]

Is falsehood an indispensable element in a political campaign? Is personal abuse, intentionally malignant, absolutely necessary? For some weeks past we have been reading two papers, representing opposing political parties, with whose editors we have pleasant acquaintance. Neither of these gentlemen, in private life and every-day intercourse, would swerve a hair's breadth from the truth, or malign a person's character, and yet in the columns of their respective papers they will make the most malicious charges, "give the lie" in good round language, and indulge in that species of slang and misrepresentation peculiar to political life! Now why is this? Doubtless many of our readers have noticed the same fact. It is one of the disgraces of modern journalism. Shall a man have two consciences, one for his home and his church, and another for his paper and the political public?

BUILDING THE NEST.

BY FRANK J. OTTARSON.

"Hail, little wife!" the Robin said,
"The Spring is warm to-day;
The fickle birds have mated new,
But we are not as they.

"Four years ago we joined our hearts;
Four happy years have flown,
And every year we fonder grew—
An' did we not, mine own?

"The wild and careless birds may roam,
And fresher fancies see,
May find delight in freer love,
But constant lovers we.

"To-morrow, an the sun do shine,
We will begin our nest;
We'll labor with a cheerful will,
For honest work is blest."

"I know," said she, "a store of moss
That I can bring with ease;"
"And I," said he, "a store of twigs
That grew on wholesome trees.

"But we must build with greater care,
And higher raise the wall;
You know we never can forget
Last Summer's fatal fall:

"The strongest, fairest of our brood
Contrived the wall to climb,
Fell to the hateful ground and died;
O, Love, that dreadful time!

"We mourned, as love alone can mourn,
The glory of our nest,
And thought within our bleeding hearts
The dead worth all the rest.

"Silent we scratched a little grave,
And gently laid him there,
And covered deep his pretty form,
Safe from the chilling air.

This year our home shall be secure,
And you shall be its light;
I'll search for food the livelong day,
And watch the livelong night.

"And when our chicks have learned to fly,
What revel we will keep—"
Just here a pet canary sung,
And woke me from my sleep.

* * *

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING READY FOR THE ENEMY.

While Mark Heber and Will Whitman were riding for life toward the new settlement, closely pursued by Indians and by Burk the outlaw, as narrated, all was alarm and excitement within the stockade.

The defenders of the little fort, with some of the women and children, were upon the platform, and gazing through the loop-holes upon the two young fugitives with wild eyes and wildly throbbing hearts.

As young Whitman had informed Mark during their captivity in the grove of cottonwoods, Mr. Hopkins had returned to the settlement at the time when Will had given chase to the antelope which had brought him into trouble. Mr. Hopkins had slain a fine young buck, and, in good spirits, had gone home with his trophy. Will's chase to the northward had been watched with spy-glasses from the fort, but when he rode into the grove in which he had encountered his terrible adventure, he had completely vanished from the gaze of his friends.

As the hours wore on and he did not reappear, and Mark Heber continued also mysteriously absent, the anxious settlers held a consultation, and they were upon the point of riding forth in search of the missing youths, when a boy who had been stationed with a spy-glass at one of the loop-holes, uttered a shuddering shriek of terror that rang through the fort like an alarm bell.

Whitman and Hopkins flew up the ladder to the platform, followed by frightened women and boys. They peered out of the loop-holes, straining their eyes for some sight of horror.

They beheld on the level prairie to the northward a couple of flying fugitives, which were promptly made out to be Mark Heber and Will Whitman, riding madly in the direction of the settlement, and pursued by a band of painted Indians, whose aspect and pursuit declared them to be hostile to the young whites.

The fugitives and their enemies were nearly five miles from the little fort, but in the peculiarly clear air of the plains, and in the brightness of the sunset, their faces might almost have been recognized without the aid of the powerful glasses.

"Oh, my poor boy!" moaned Mrs. Whitman, clinging to the rough logs forming the stockade. "To die within sight of us and safety! God save him!"

Her tearless eyes were fixed in an anguished gaze upon the hindmost of the two young fugitives, her eldest born, and never swerved from him during the breathless moments that followed.

"They wave their arms!" cried Mr. Whitman, after a long look at the fugitives through his glass. "They want to put us on our guard. The Indians are firing. They miss the boys—thank God! How the boys ride! Mark's horse stumbles. See! the boy wheels in his saddle and shoots the horse behind him! One pursuer less. And now the boys ride for their lives!"

Some of the women fell on their knees in prayer; some sobbed aloud; some could only stare out upon the scene with breathless excitement.

The children of the settlement comprehending the tragedy enacting, gathered under the platform and cried piteously.

Gay Heber had climbed the ladder next after Mr. Whitman and Hopkins, and her great brown eyes followed every movement of Mark in a silence and suspense that were terrible.

"The savages are gaining," cried Mr. Whitman, after a pause that seemed an age. "There's a white man among them—at their very head. It's Burk—the fellow Heber flogged in the train. God help the boys! Now they come on again—now their speed slackens. We must go out to the boys' rescue."

"No, Whitman!" exclaimed Hopkins, his features working nervously. "We haven't the men, and if we had the men, we haven't the horses. Two or three of us, with such poor nags as we have, would be lost in the midst of those demons. They'd circle around us, and kill us at their leisure. Another thing, there may be Indians coming down the river, under shelter of the trees, to capture the fort in our absence, if we should leave it. No, Whitman, our place is here with our wives and children."

"You are right," answered Whitman, with an effort; "but how can I see my boy die before my eyes? A savage fired at him then. An Indian is gaining on them. He will overtake—There, young Heber wheels again in his saddle and fires. The Indian falls—he's dead. Heber's a very lion. Lord, how he rides! His horse is faster than Will's. See, he holds up for my boy. Heber is as good as he is brave, bless him! The lads again wave their arms toward the fort."

"The Indians may have another party on the river, as I suggested," said Hopkins. "We ought to have a sentinel on the opposite wall, overlooking the two rivers. The gates are fast, and armed as we are we can surely hold our own against a dozen savages. A score of Indians, though, would finish us."

One of the boys, rifle in hand, ran along the platform, to the eastern side of the stockade.

"Heber and Will are still riding like the wind!" cried Whitman, all excitement. "They are within two miles of us. A few minutes will decide their fate, one way or the other. They are gallant souls, those boys. See Heber hold back for Will! I'll love Mark Heber all my life for his chivalry to my son. And now, on they come. Once they get under cover of our rifles, let the savages taste our fire. Be ready to shoot at the word."

Gay Heber, with a pale, heroic face, and glowing, inspired eyes, stole from her loop-hole down the ladder to the ground. From one of the crying little children she caught away a white apron and tied it by its strings to a long stick which she found upon the ground. Then she ran to the great gates, hurriedly unbarred one of them, flinging it wide open, and ran out upon the little draw-bridge crossing the ditch or moat, and stood there in the wind, her hair and garments blowing, her improvised banner held high above her and fluttering wildly, the stick snapping and bending, and requiring both her hands to keep it steady.

Her signal was seen and comprehended by the young fugitives. They waved their arms anew, and spurred their horses to renewed speed.

And still after them came the Indians, with whoops and yells, their hideous faces all aflame with fury at the loss of the warrior whom Mark Heber had slain but a few minutes before, while in the midst of his flight.

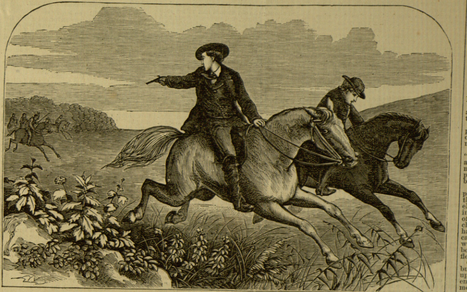
The minutes seemed to Gay like ages. She kept her eyes upon Mark and prayed in her heart, her pale lips moving dumbly.

Above her, and within the fort, upon the platform commanding the loop-holes, the men and boys, with grim, stern faces, stood ready to fire when the moment of command should be given. Mr. Whitman did not speak again for some minutes, but he drew his breath hard, and set his teeth together, and his agitation expressed itself only in the wild anxiety that looked from his eyes.

But at last a cry of thanksgiving rang out upon the breathless silence, and Mrs. Whitman fell upon her knees, her death-like calm broken up, her faltering voice breaking into prayers of gratitude.

The fugitives were safe! They were riding, still at full speed, into the shadow of the tall stockade, their white, eager faces upturned to the view of their friends.

When they were fairly under the cover of the rifles, Whitman gasped hoarsely the word of command, and a half-dozen shots were fired at the savages, who halted abruptly, and then wheeled about and retreated to a distance of half a mile, again halting.


THE FLIGHT OF MARK HEBER AND WILL WHITMAN.

The two young heroes rode over the draw-bridge, Gay retreating before them, and clattered into the fort.

The men and women came bounding down the ladders. Some boys secured the open gate. Mr. Whitman pulled his son from his saddle and held him in silence for a moment, then relinquished him to his mother.

Mark Heber dismounted and took Gay in his arms. Neither spoke, but their silence was more fraught with meaning than words. Mark could hear the wild throbbing of the girl's heart, as he gathered her to his breast, and he kissed her with a yearning tenderness he had never before experienced, even toward her.

When Gay at length gently withdrew herself from his embrace, Mr. Whitman caught Mark's hand in a hearty grip, and cried out:

"My boy tells me he owes his life to you, and that in your captivity and in your flight you constantly preferred his safety before your own. God bless you, Mark Heber, even as I do!"

Mrs. Whitman came up and embraced young Heber as she had embraced her son.

"We have only tasted the beginning of danger," cried Mark, his clear voice ringing. "The Indians now near the fort expect reinforcements at nightfall, under the terrific Sioux chief Yako, and the yet more terrible white outlaw Blue Jack. Fifty picked warriors under these leaders will attack us to-night."

The settlers groaned and shuddered.

"We cannot defend the stockade against so heavy a force," continued Mark calmly and coolly, his stern, resolute eyes looking around upon his breathless listeners. "There are but eight of us, all told. Two of the eight only are experienced men. What are we to do?"

"God knows," said Mr. Whitman gloomily. "We may have to abandon our settlement, as so many have had to do on the Little Blue, in Kansas."

"We have no time to abandon it," cried Mark. "The crisis is upon us. The savages will attack us to-night. If we venture forth with the women and children, we doom them and ourselves to certain death and captivity. Is there a sentinel above on the platform?"

Two of the elder boys hurried up the ladder to watch the movements of the Indians from the loop-holes.

"The savages are consulting together!" they reported, in shrill boyish voices.

"Burk is with them," said Mark Heber. "They won't attack us before night. They can then attack us upon four sides at once, with a dozen men at each side to the two only of our force. They are furious, desperate, determined. They mean to put our men to death, and destroy or carry into captivity the women and children—a fate worse for them than death. Burk taunted me with their intentions."

"What, in Heaven's name, are we to do?" cried Hopkins.

"We must send the women and children into the block-house," said Mark Heber. "We must transport thither our provisions, and all our choicest possessions. We must pen our cattle near the block-house, and there let them take their chances. We can make everything snug, and try to hold the stockade. If failure becomes inevitable, we must retreat to the block-house. We can surely hold that against any force until our provisions and ammunition fail."

"There may be a wagon train along in the course of to-morrow," suggested Hopkins.

"And there may not be one along in a week," returned Mark promptly. "We must depend upon ourselves. Three hours' smart riding would take a messenger to Fort McPherson for aid, and three hours' more would bring the soldiers to us. Who will go to the fort?"

"We can't spare Whitman," said Hopkins, "and my place too is here. One of the boys must go. We need your clear head here, Heber. If anything happens to Whitman, you'll have to take command of our small garrison. Why did we let our best men, and so many of them, go after stock that now we may never need?"

"I hope and believe we shall need it," said Mark cheerfully. "We can hold out, I think, till the soldiers come. Horace Brown could ride to the fort, and he has a pretty good horse, too. The only question is, how will he leave the fort? He cannot go until nightfall."

"It'll be pitch-dark," said young Brown, a sturdy, red-faced young man with light-gray eyes, a short pug nose and thick lips—ugly of face, but honest of soul and brave of spirit; "and I can slip out of the fort like a greased eel. When you say the word, Heber, I'm off."

"Wait till dark," replied Mark. "Mr. Whitman, I lost your horse and saddle, but here's a better horse, with better equipments, in its place. I wish now I had brought an extra horse, but I hadn't much time to spare, as you may believe, when I got this one. Let us go up to the platform and see what the savages are about."

He led the way up, and peered out of one of the loop-holes.

The Indians had come to a decision, and were scattering their forces in a manner to guard the fort and prevent all egress therefrom. Evidently they suspected an attempt would be made to send a messenger to Fort McPherson for troops. Mark saw that it would be the last act of desperation to undertake to dispatch young Brown for assistance.

Four of the Indians set out to swim the river with their horses, with the evident design of watching the water side of the stockade, and so preventing all egress from the settlement by the postern gate, and the remainder of the savages, with Burk, settled down upon the prairie, a half-mile from the fort, to watch the great gates.

"Things look dark," said Mark Heber, "but we won't give up yet. Old Swivel's bark will scatter that group at any moment, but that won't make matters easier for a messenger, for the red-skins would pursue him, if he left the fort in the confusion. It looks now as if we shouldn't be able to send a messenger."

"There'll be one more rifle then at the fort," said Mr. Whitman.

"Old Swivel ought to be moved to the upper story of the block-house," exclaimed Mark, struck with a sudden thought. "If we have to retreat, owing to the superior numbers of the enemy, we must not allow the swivel gun to fall into the hands of the savages. They could turn it upon us and batter us to pieces in a short time. Leave a sentinel at each side of the fort, Mr. Whitman, and let us hasten to the block-house."

Mark's suggestion was acted upon. The two sentinels, boys too young to be of much assistance in actual labor, were placed on guard. The seven members of the little garrison set to work in good earnest.

A sort of pen was soon made near the block-house, and the horses and cattle and pigs were driven into it.

Then men, women and children brought provisions from their houses, and these were stored in the inner chamber of the second story. Fuel was brought, ammunition, weapons of all kinds excepting those upon the persons of the men, and even the swivel gun was hoisted with some difficulty to the upper story of the block-house.

Then came the little family treasures, the big Bibles, the few silver spoons, the pieces of old-fashioned china ware, choice feather-beds and best garments, and the children brought their dolls and playthings with the earnestness and haste that characterized the proceedings of their elders.

These arrangements were not completed until nightfall. The evening meal of the settlers was composed of the cold remnants of the midday dinner, but Gay made hot coffee and broiled a steak off Mr. Hopkins' antelope for Mark and Will Whitman.

After their repast the two young men mounted the platform. The night was coming on dark, but as yet a light gloom pervaded the scene. The wind, which blows so freshly and so frequently upon the plains with the force and fury of a gale at sea, was blowing now. The sky was overcast, and not a star was to be seen.

The Indians, like dusky shadows, were seen upon the plain in the distance. They were waiting for their expected reinforcements.

Will Whitman went to the loop-hole assigned him, and studied the scene. Mr. Whitman assigned members of his force to the three remaining sides of the stockade, retaining, however, three men besides himself to guard the great gates, which would probably be the first point attacked.

"We have a good deal of surface to cover with our small force, Heber," he sighed, speaking to Mark, whom he had chosen to retain near him, having unlimited confidence in Mark's strong right arm and steady brain. "If a scaling party should attack the north side, we shall have to retreat to the block-house without delay. It is strange that white men, like Blue Jack and Burk, can lead these red demons against white men and women. They must be worse devils than the Indians."

"They are," said Mark, "a great deal worse, because they have had the advantages of civilization. Blue Jack is educated, and must have had rare advantages during his early years."

"He is a graduate of Harvard college, and comes of a rich and fine old family," declared Mr. Whitman. "Landford, the guide, told me so. But he's as desperate a villain as ever went unhung. No one knows his name or history, and they would not have known that he was a graduate of Harvard, except that the man Burk said so after Blue Jack had fled from Kearney City, after he had stabbed the conductor of his train. I tell you, Mark, I believe the fellow was born bad, if such a thing could be. Why he should lead a band of savages to destroy us is beyond my imagination to conceive."

"I'll tell you, Mr. Whitman," said Mark calmly. "I am the Jonah of this ship—little Gay and I."

"Gay Heber and you, Mark? Ah, you mean because you incurred the enmity of the fellows on the train?"

"Yes, sir; I mean that, and more," declared Mark, resolved to make a clean breast of it. "I have something to say to you in confidence, Mr. Whitman. Gay is not my sister."

"Not your sister!" repeated Mr. Whitman, in amazement.

"No, sir. But I love her as if she were, and I would rather the others did not know the truth. There is a mystery about Gay's birth and identity, with which Blue Jack is in some way, I know not how, connected. Let me tell you the story."

With considerable agitation, Mark told how there had come to the door of his father's farm-house, in Seneca county, New York, one day in May, thirteen years before, an insane woman, carrying a little child of some twelve or fifteen months in her arms.

He told how his mother had given the wanderer shelter, and forborne to turn her away, or to send her to the county alms-house, through the summer that had followed, and how, months later, the insane lady—for she was a lady, in spite of insanity and rags—had died in his father's house, and had been buried in the country graveyard a few miles distant.

He related how his parents had cherished the little waif, how they had died, and he had brought her with him to the great West to share his fortune. He told of Blue Jack's agitation at beholding Gay, of his questioning her if she were really Mark Heber's sister, of his watching her in her wagon, and of his attempting to steal Gay's trinkets through the instrumentality of Burk. Then he added what Burk had told him during his captivity—that the attack was to be made upon the settlement by Blue Jack, that he might gain possession of Gay.

"Now you know all," said Mark, in conclusion. "What do you think of it all, Mr. Whitman?"

"I think," said the old farmer slowly and thoughtfully, "that this Blue Jack is Gay's father."

"Gay thinks and fears so too," said Mark. "Something—instinct, I suppose—tells her that this man is more to her than a mere stranger."

"He is her father—the 'Edmund' from whom her mother fled," said Mr. Whitman, in a tone of thorough conviction. "He broke her mother's heart. It's clear as daylight."

"And yet I cannot think that my pure, innocent little Gay springs from such a parentage," said Mark.

"She probably resembles her mother. Of course she does, for she is purity itself and innocence and goodness. I tell you, Mark, there's not a spark of good in the man Blue Jack. The girl's life stands between him and something he covets—a fortune, perhaps—and he means to destroy her. He has acted like an enemy to her from the first. He's afraid of her, and he means to bury her among the Indians."

"You see now, Mr. Whitman," said our young hero, with bitterness, "that Gay and I are indeed the Jonahs of the settlement. If we could go forth in the darkness, and make our way to Fort McPherson, you would only have to send a messenger to Blue Jack or Burk yonder to perhaps save the fort."

"They would destroy us for letting you go," said Whitman. "No, Mark. I am glad you have told me the story, but I beg you to tell it to no one else. I will die in the defence of that innocent child, before I will permit her to go forth to some horrible fate prepared for her by the demon Blue Jack. We'll sink or swim together, Mark. Our lots are one. Even if I would do otherwise, I cannot now."

He held out his hand, and Mark pressed it warmly.

"If I could save you all by the sacrifice of my own life," said Mark brokenly, "I would gladly do it. But I cannot sacrifice little Gay. I am sure, in my own soul, that Blue Jack has prepared for her some horrible fate, either slavery or death. He has not a spark of fatherly kindness toward her, but instead, a hatred and a horror of her. She stands in his way somehow, and he fears her. I believe with you that my retreat with Gay from the settlement would not help you. Only your surrender of us can benefit you."

"Say no more, Mark. I'd as soon surrender two of my own children. The matter is settled. We'll live or die together. And now, Mark, look out—your eyes are younger than mine. Is there not some movement among the savages?"

Mark Heber looked keenly out of his loop-hole.

The shadows were growing thicker upon the plain, but among them Mark's young eyes detected deeper shadows, many in number, and moving steadily from the northward.

"The Indian reinforcements have come!" he cried. "Forty Sioux warriors, under Yako and Blue Jack! They are joining the force under Burk and his savage leader."

The three sentinels on the same side of the stockade with Mark Heber, Mr. Whitman, his son Will, and Mr. Hopkins, peered out into the shadows. Their scrutiny verified Mark's discovery. The Sioux warriors under Blue Jack and his Indian father-in-law had arrived, and had joined the force under Burk, not over half a mile distant from the little fort.

"Now what will they do?" asked Mark, watching them. "How will they advance to the attack? There is a formidable number of them, and we are but a handful. Our case is indeed desperate!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ENTRANCE EFFECTED.

The words of Mark Heber pressed home upon the hearts of his three listeners like daggers' points. Their situation was terrible enough to appall a larger force than that which formed the small garrison. There were but seven persons, five of them youths and boys, to defend the small settlement against a force of fifty Indians, versed in all the strategy of savage warfare, armed with the rifle, revolver, torch, and scalping-knife.

"We cannot send forth a messenger to Fort McPherson," said Mr. Hopkins. "He'd be pursued and captured, and put to death by torture. We must not send from us one arm that can assist in the defence. If there's hot work, and we get into close quarters, we can retreat to the block-house and hold the savages at bay until to-morrow noon, when possibly some wagon train may pass along and relieve us."

Mr. Whitman approved this suggestion, which was, in truth, the only one that could be offered.

Mark Heber again applied his face to his look-out.

"The savages are moving!" he cried. "They are coming this way. They have picketed their horses, and are coming on foot!"

Mr. Whitman leaned over the side of the platform, looking down upon the women and children huddled together below in the darkness.

"To the block-house!" he cried out loudly. "Give the alarm as you go, so that if there is a woman or child in one of the houses they may join you. Go up the ladder into the upper story, and leave the ladder for us. To the block-house!"

There were no outcries from those brave pioneer women, but their faces were pale, and their breathing was panting and hard. The elder boys and girls ran off at full speed, yet in silence, scarcely daring to breathe. Some of the women caught up their little toddling children, and two carried babies. Mrs. Knox had an infant in her arms, and Gay Heber caught up a wee child of two years from the woman's side, and pressing it to her own young bosom, ran with it toward the block-house as fleetly as a fawn.

Gay was among the earliest at the ladder, but she was the last to mount it. She helped up the little children with gentle words of encouragement; she assisted the burdened mothers, whose dragging skirts and hampered arms made their movements unsteady and even perilous, as they climbed the steep ladder; she even waited bravely until every boy was safe in the upper and overhanging story of the block-house, before she crept up the rounds like a shadow and entered the gallery which was to be the retreat of the little garrison at the last resort.

The women and children had retreated into the inner room, which was intensely dark, and the children, afraid of the black gloom and in terror of the Indians, burst out into pitiful wails, which the mothers vainly tried to stop, and some of them ended by joining in.

Gay found her lantern which she had hung up in the outer room, lighted it, and came into the dark chamber like a spirit of brightness and peace.

"Mrs. Knox, let me take Johnny," she said, hanging up her lantern against the chimney, and approaching the totally discouraged and frightened young mother. "I can put him to sleep. And I think," she added, in her modest, gentle way, with a glance around her, "if the children were all put to sleep, it would be better. If the men have to retreat to the block-house, it will take all the heart out of them to find us crying like the children themselves. And if the worst comes to worst, we may be needed to help defend the block-house. Surely we can fight for our lives, and to help those so dear to us, if we are women!"

"If you can keep up your courage, Gay, I can," said Mrs. Knox, wiping her eyes. "You are right, and we will not be cowards!"

Gay walked the floor with little Johnny and put him to sleep. She laid him upon a feather-bed in a corner, and softly hushed the cries of one of the Halsey children. The other women took courage and the children were soothed into slumber, and the dim rays of the lamp fell upon brave, if pale, faces, and upon calmly resolute eyes. Quiet soon reigned within the room.

Gay went out into the gallery, which, as we have said, overhung the lower story, and looked out toward the stockade. She strained her hearing, but saw and heard nothing in the darkness which was now blackness.

"What are they doing now?" she asked herself, in anxious suspense. "Are the Indians creeping up?"

The four men upon the western side of the stockade, peering out into the gloom which was like a thick vail drawn over the landscape, were asking themselves the same question.

When the darkness had deepened they had lost sight of the Indians whom they had last seen advancing, then half a mile distant, upon the fort. The forms they had seen seemed blotted out. They could trace no object, could hear no sound. Hopkins believed that the savages had halted in their advance, and were in consultation.

"I know they are near," whispered Mark, all excitement. "I seem to feel something terrible in the air. How the wind blows! Is it not strange we do not hear even a rustling? Can the Indians be coming up upon some other side?"

"If they don't show themselves soon we'll retreat to the block-house," muttered Whitman uneasily. "This silence means mischief. Some deviltry's brewing. They may undertake to scale the wall and get between us and the block-house."

With increasing anxiety, they looked and listened.

The wind brought to their ears the neighing of the Indians' horses in the distance, thus proving that the enemy had not retreated. But no other sound came to enlighten them, or put them on their guard.

Whitman's uneasiness increased.

"Mark," he whispered, "go around the wall to the right, and listen. Will, go to the left. Each make a circuit of the platform around the stockade. Be still as cats."

Mark Heber stole away to the right, Will Whitman to the left. Both were silent as shadows, creeping close to the walls, and pausing at every step to listen. They passed the guards, who were at their posts and vigilant, but they had nothing to report. They passed each other on the eastern side of the stockade, and returned to their station above the great gates, arriving at nearly the same moment.

"No sign of the savages in any direction," was their report. "All was still as death inside and outside the fort."

"They must mean to scale the walls," said Mr. Whitman. "I fought Indians down in Kansas, and learned something of their ways, and I tell you, boys, I'd rather hear the wildest hullabaloo than experience this unnatural quiet. The savages may be within three feet of us at this moment. A red-skin's tomahawk may be uplifted above our heads at any instant. I tremble within myself with dread and expectancy."

"They must strike soon," murmured Mark Heber, under his breath. "The suspense is terrible. This awful hush is full of sinister meaning. Hark! Is not that a rustling in the grass outside the walls?"

They all listened. The rustling must have been made by the wind, which plowed low among the flowers and grasses, and which whistled through the pickets at the top of the stockade.

"Mark," said Mr. Whitman, "make a circuit of the stockade upon the ground under the platform. The idea grows upon me that the Indians may attempt to scale the wall."

Mark descended the ladder, his weapons in hand, and set out upon his solitary tramp.

"How dark it is!" was his thought. "What a night it is for them!"

He had all along apprehended an attack upon the northern side of the stockade, and it was to this point he directed his attention principally now.

He was creeping along close to the heavy logs forming the wall, when he fancied he heard voices whispering upon the outer side of the stockade. He listened, and heard a sound as of one attempting to climb a rope attached to the picket on the top of the wall.

"Ah," thought Mark, "they mean to swarm over into the fort at this point in the darkness."

He stole along to a ladder near at hand, and softly crept up to the platform and waited in the darkness.

He had scarcely accomplished the feat when by the still movements above him he learned that some one had mounted to the pickets above him. The next moment the person had climbed over, and was lowering himself gently and silently to the platform close beside Mark.

The information concerning the fort gained by Pringle during his stay at the settlement was being ably used by his savage friends to destroy the settlers.

Mark drew his long hunting knife and braced himself for action.

"They are getting one man into the fort to open the gate to them," he thought. "I see, and I am ready!"

The moccasined feet of the intruder touched the wooden platform not a yard distant from Mark, who crouched like a panther against the wall, his eyes glaring like coals in the darkness.

The intruder did not see him. He drew a long, low breath, and then uttered a low hiss, probably a signal to those without of his safety.

Mark's hand grasped his knife with a grip like steel. The hissing sound had assured him of the position of the intruder. With a sudden swift motion, he bent forward and thrust his knife to the hilt in the bosom of the enemy.

The blind stroke had been guided, let us say, by Providence. There was a gasping for breath, a sudden striking out with both arms blindly, a muffled groan, and the intruder reeled and fell backward over the edge of the platform to the ground.

Mark looked over, but could see nothing. The fellow did not stir, and Mark believed him to be dead.

He bent his ear to the wall. There was a faint disturbance without. The wretch's fall had been heard.

Mark climbed up the rough logs to the pickets, felt along with his hand and found the rope which was knotted to one of them. The rope was drawn tightly, and his ears and touch convinced him that another man was climbing up by it to the summit of the wall.

As quick as light Mark drew his knife across the rope. It parted, and rope and man fell heavily to the ground.

Then followed half-suppressed exclamations, a smothered curse in English, and a sound as of persons stealing away in the gloom.

"They are going to try something else," thought Mark. "I'll take a look at my capture."

He descended to the ground, drew a match from his pocket, and sought the spot upon which the intruder had fallen. Finding it, he struck the match and allowed its fitful glare to fall upon the body, which lay where it had fallen.

The body was that of a white man. He was dead and growing stiff. He was lying on his face. Mark turned him over, and recognized the rough, bearded face as that of Isaac Pringle, the spy of Blue Jack who had gained an entrance into the fort by stratagem more than two weeks before, in order to steal the jewels belonging to Gay Heber.

The villain had met the death he merited, and had gone to his reward.

Leaving his body on the ground where it had fallen, Mark took the villain's revolvers and bowie-knife and placed them upon his own person. Without wasting further time upon the dead man, he completed his circuit and returned to Mr. Whitman with his report.

No one save himself had seen or heard the savages.

"Their idea was to get some one inside to open the gate to them," said Whitman. "They know that Pringle is dead by your cutting the rope. They'll try some new dodge next. But what will it be?"

They waited a few minutes, but the question was not answered by any sound from without.

Mark then proposed to go off upon a fresh scout, and hastened away.

He had not gone ten yards when an awful clamor arose upon the black night air—a clamor of warwhoops and yells that were blood-curdling—and the savage horde hurled themselves upon the great gates, having leaped across the ditch. They had found logs, it seemed by the noise, and were using them as battering-rams.

"The gates will hold," said Whitman. "Fire!"

The four men fired in a volley. The awful noise without increased to a perfect Pandemonium, but the settlers could not tell whether or no their shots had taken effect.

The boys acting as sentinels on the other sides of the stockade came hurrying to the scene of attack, eager to join in the defence.

"Back to your posts!" cried Mark Heber, hearing their hurrying steps. "You are to protect the other sides."

But the boys were too excited to hear or heed. They pushed on to the point of peril, and their rifles rang out their shrill defiance to the savages.

Mark longed to join them, but three sides of the stockade were undefended and unwatched, and he pressed on, returning by the northern side.

As he neared it he heard sounds again in the stillness—sounds that startled him and made his brave soul quail within him.

The Indians had but feigned their retreat from the northern side, and had returned to it again. The attack upon the gates was to cover their efforts at this point. There were not more than a score of savages clamoring at the great gates, but here, as Mark could tell by the sounds, they were scaling the walls and swarming over into the fort in numbers.

Over a score of the Indians already stood upon the ground inside the stockade!

Mark beat a silent retreat and fled to his friends, ascending the platform, and grasping Whitman's arm, as he gasped hoarsely:

"The majority of the Indians are inside the fort—between us and the block-house! They have learned our whereabouts from our firing, and mean to cut off our retreat—to prevent us from reaching our doomed families!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Female Skaters.

In Friesland the women are as fond of skating as the men, and frequently have races. At one of these races, which took place some time since, on a piece of ice in the outer ditch of the town of Leuwarden, there were thirteen competitors for the prize. They skated two and two, and after each heat, she who arrived last at the goal quitted the course. The seventh and last trial was between the two remaining winners, one of whom was twenty years of age and the other sixteen. The former gained the principal prize, consisting of a gold ornament for the head, and the other the second, which was a coral necklace, with a gold clasp. One of the competitors on this occasion was past fifty, and many of them only fifteen. To afford some idea of their swiftness, it is stated that one young female passed over the course, which was one hundred and fifty yards long, in thirteen seconds, or a mile in less than two minutes and a half.

CRUISE OF THE "HAPPY SHIP."

BY R. W. NEWMAN.

It was in April, 184–. The British ship of war *Sparrowhawk* lay in Southampton waters ready for sea; the hurry, bustle and confusion of fitting were at last over; bumboats dismissed, powder on board, and the ship all a-taunto, waiting for our captain, whom we were all curious to see, and anxious to know what sort of a Turk was going to command us.

We did not wait long; at seven bells we were all mustered to receive him. He came on board with a young, light-haired midshipman, and was received on the quarter-deck by Lieutenant Harebottle. He looked round the decks a little with our first luff, (*luff*, is the sailor's abbreviation of lieutenant,) and then all hands were piped aft, to hear him read his commission.

In stature he stood about five feet nine inches, and thick set, with a very quiet manner; his face clear and open, with a good head well set on his shoulders. The officers were well impressed with their new captain.

After reading his commission, he turned to the crew and said, "My men, for the space of three years we are to be together. I will show you every kindness compatible with the discipline of this ship, and yours will be, I trust, a cheerful and willing service. I am going to ask one favor—that is, let there be no swearing on board this ship. I hope there will be no punishments. Gentlemen," turning to his officers, "I look to you for a cordial support in carrying out the duties of my command, and your example in this particular."

We cheered ship and piped to dinner.

The new captain was the subject of discussion on the birth-deck that day, you may depend upon it. "The parson," said they. "We've got a sheep on board for captain." "Well, I'll swear right afore him to-morrow," said Jack Crags.

"No, you won't, Jack," said an old quartermaster, "for you'll get the cat certain. I have sailed with him before. He was first luff of the *Warspite* when I was in her. He is as good an officer as I ever went to sea with."

"That's no reason that he should stop our swearing. He'll stop our grog next, I suppose," cried Jack, and all together.

In the wardroom and in the midshipman's berth the matter was talked about, and all concluded that Capt. John Henry Bullock would have a hard time of it before we saw the "Lizard" again; but all the officers who had sailed with him agreed that he was a good officer, a first-class seaman, and a gentleman.

Well, the next morning the pilot came on board. We got under weigh, and having a free wind, soon ran past the Needles and got well out in the Channel. Now we began to settle ourselves, to shake ourselves into our places; for there was a place for every man, and every man, we knew, must be in his right place, to get acquainted with our shipmates, nearly all strangers to each other. Yet here we were together for three years, before we should see old Albion's shores again.

> "I am on the sea, I am on the sea;
> I am where I would ever be;
> With the blue above, and the blue below,
> And silence reigns where'er I go."

But with the joyousness, the daring enterprise of youth's first venture, there will linger, to sadden us, thoughts of the home we leave behind us; for there is none so bad, or so good either, as not to leave some one to shed a tear for them, as not to have some one to regret.

The next morning we were many of us busy writing letters home, it being understood that a bag would be made up for the pilot, and at eight bells our letters must be ready. We had passed the Start, and were running free with a fresh breeze. So we signalled a pilot boat, and about four bells we hove our main-yard to the mast, and put our pilot on board of him, and were soon bowling off our eight knots.

That night we ran through the British fleet, cruising in the chops of the Channel. We signalled them, and were answered, I think, by the *Prince Albert*, and by one of the lee-most ships, as we passed through them.

We were now busy exercising the men at the great guns, small arms, and in the rigging. In fact we were constantly at quarters, reefing, taking in and making sail, to accustom the men to their officers, and both to their duties. This Jack did not like, and there was some grumbling among the crew, and the officers were bored by it; but it must be remembered that there were green hands on board, and land-lubbers, who must be taught. Now it would never do to leave to necessity the experience to be gained by this practice, and so, for a fortnight, we were kept at it, till we became tolerably efficient for any emergency, and a useful ship in any squadron.

The first lieutenant had no sinecure; in all such cases, he is the hardest worked man in the ship. In the wardroom and the midshipman's mess the captain's request had some effect, and swearing was tabooed as ungentlemanly.

Among the crew there were some men who, out of bravado, would not give up their bad habit, among whom were Jack Crags and some dozen or two incorrigibles. The best men, however, felt the influence of the quarter-deck, and gradually refrained.

All hands had been turned up twice to witness punishment; the Articles of War were read; all the officers were on deck; it was made as solemn as possible. The boatswain's mate administered the punishment; the unfortunate man was sent to the sick bay, and the retreat was beaten. The second time the fellow was triced up in the gangway, and one dozen had been well administered, when the captain could stand it no longer, took two steps forward of the capstan, and said:

"Avast there, boatswain's mate. Enough."

And then, to the crew, he said:

"My men, I hate flogging. Some think it necessary—I don't. Do your duty like men, and save me the pain—and yourselves— But I will never again interfere with punishment. Cast him off. Beat the retreat."

A faint effort at a cheer was made by the men. The captain went, visibly affected, to his cabin. The men were piped to dinner.

In a few minutes the captain's servant came to Mr. Harebottle, and said, touching his hat:

"The captain's compliments, and would be glad to see you a few minutes in his cabin, sir."

"In a few minutes, Horace," said he, "I'll be down."

He went to the captain's cabin accordingly. The captain welcomed him, offered him a glass of wine, and said:

"Well, old boy, I am sorry if I annoyed you, but I really could not help it. I hate this flogging so."

"I perfectly agree with you, Captain Bullock," said his lieutenant. "He had half his punishment, and you told them that you would not interfere again."

"I am glad you say so, Harebottle, for I was afraid you might take the matter ill."

"No fear of that; I know you too well. And if these fellows saw you once in action, they would respect and love you as I do."

"Come, come, old fellow, don't flatter me; take your wine. Here's to you."

"Your health," said the lieutenant. "I think your little speech, and the evident truthfulness of it, did good with the crew."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I'd rather rule by love than fear. But I'll have no swearing in this ship."

"Well, I must go on deck."

"All right! But I say, old fellow, come and dine with me at three, will you?"

"All right! *Adios!*"

The first lieutenant went on deck, to his duties. The gun-room officers dined at two o'clock. Pentland, our second luff, said:

"Our captain seemed much moved to-day."

"He is a brave fellow, who does not like to see the cat laid on, and he is right," said O'Neil, our third lieutenant.

"He is a gude mon, an ye'll find him in the cockpit wi' me, as soon as the action is o'er, and he can be spared from the quarter-deck," said McAlister, our surgeon.

"He is a Christian gentleman, who feels his responsibility for four hundred bodies, and souls too, committed to his charge," said Mr. Lecturn, our chaplain.

"I'll trouble you for a little of the gravy, Pentland," said old Chaffers, the master. "Thank you, that will do. Wine with you, Lecturn."

In the midshipmen's mess-room they were not so complimentary to our good captain, that would not let them swear; so they took it out in swearing at the boys, Lun and Bones, who waited on them. Conway and Minto took the captain's part, and bravely defended him; while Field, Rae and Harrison called him a muff, and no sailor and so forth. But it was all in good part, after all, and one of them had been four hours in the cross-trees that morning.

In the 'tween decks the captain was less talked about; the old sailors had fallen into their routine of duty, and were satisfied; and even the incorrigibles were awed by his determined manner, when he addressed them this morning. They saw, or thought they did, more of the lion in him than the lamb.

A day or two after this, the captain and his first lieutenant were walking the quarter-deck together, when the captain said:

"Harebottle, I see we are approaching our destination."

"Yes, sir. We shall be on the tail of the Bank to-morrow. The master says he will sound to-morrow, if this wind holds."

"Well, then," said the captain, "suppose we make it a grand exercise day, after division practice. We will exercise the men aloft. We'll make all sail, take it in, and reef topsails in stays. What do you think, Harebottle?"

"All right, sir; and I think you will be satisfied with the proficiency of the men."

"Come to my cabin; and, Harebottle, bring Chaffers along. Let us see where we are."

Presently the three were seated in the captain's cabin. The chart was produced, and after a little nautical discussion, Chaffers said:

"There I place her, sir."

"And I agree," said the first lieutenant.

"Then there we are," said the captain; "and within three days' sail of Halifax."

The next day was a beautiful one, with a fine breeze. The practice at quarters was over, and the men had had their dinner. Sail had been reduced, and the men were ordered aloft to reef topsails, when, in swaying round the main-yard, by some clumsiness one of the men was knocked or fell overboard. The cry of "man overboard!" was given. The captain heard it, pulled the string of the buoy rope, and let her go; then jumped on the poop, and saw the man, who was disabled and could not reach it. He sung out, "Lower a quarter boat, idlers! When you're at leisure, Harebottle, wear ship and pick us up!" and jumped overboard.

The man had been stunned, and the captain had great difficulty in getting him on the buoy; but he did so at last. The fellow soon recovered; and the captain, treading water, held on to the buoy too, which in this way supported them both.

The first boat that was dropped from the ship had a promiscuous crew, under the command of Midshipman Conway, the officers being all at their stations, and the ship in stays.

The second boat, under command of Lieutenant Pentland, had her regular crew, with the assistant surgeon. Pentland carefully took the bearings before he left the ship, and got to the captain before the other boat. They got him on board well and hearty. The man, however, was injured, and was faint; so they got him into the stern sheets, and Maxwell, on examining him, found that one of his ribs was broken, probably by the ring of the studding-sail boom. He relieved him, however, and made him comfortable.

They laid on their oars, head to sea. The ship came up to them, hove her main-yard aback, and took them on board.

When the captain came over the side, the fellows received him with a roaring cheer. And the expressions heard among them were, "Bully for you, old brick! Gad, Bill, he's the sailor's friend after all!"

"I won't be whipped into anything, but—I'll give up swearing, just to please the old fellow," said Pipes, one of the boatswain's mates.

"If anybody swears in this ship, I'll 'tan' him, for the captain's sake," said Chips, one of the carpenters.

Pentland and Conway, the doctor and the first luff, dined with the captain that day. After the cloth was removed, and they were alone, the captain asked the doctor how his patient was.

"He is a very sick man," said he. "However, I've bled him, and given him a cathartic, and I'll see him again this evening."

"Do, Doctor, for I should not like to lose the poor fellow after all. Will a bowl of soup do him good, by the way?" asked the captain.

"I warrant you it will, if *you* send it to him," said the doctor.

He rang his bell. Horace appeared.

"Have you any soup left?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring me a bowl of it, with a piece of toast."

It was done.

"Now, Horace, take this to the sick bay, for the man who fell overboard; and here, take him a couple of oranges. Good for him, aren't they, Doctor?"

"Very good," said the doctor. "I think he has a little fever."

"By the way, Harebottle, who is this man? Tell me all about him."

"He came on board in a draft from the Portsmouth dock-yard; he is a thorough seaman, and the worst man in the ship. Is not that so, Pentland?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is his name?"

"Jack Crags," said Harebottle.

"I am sorry to hear such an account of him," said the captain. "But never mind, Doctor; try and pull him through, notwithstanding."

The doctor came to report to the captain that evening. The man was worse, delirious at times.

"I'll go and see him. Will you go with me, Doctor?" said the captain.

"Certainly, sir."

The captain and doctor went forward to the sick bay, and found their patient blessedly asleep, as the doctor expressed it. It was life to him, he said, in his position. The captain sat beside him, and put his hand on his head for a few minutes; then he said to the man in charge:

"Tell him, when he awakes, that I have been here, and will be here to see him in the morning."

"Don't wake him on any account," said the doctor.

In the morning the captain was early at the sick bay, and found poor Jack Crags awake and better, but very weak. He looked up at the captain, and said:

"Oh, Captain, Captain, it seems a thousand years since I fell off that yard; and you have been with me all the time, fighting for me and feeding me. Oh, I cannot tell you all now, but I will by and by. And when I come back to life, you are by my side; your kind message was the first thing I heard. Forgive my speaking so to you, my Captain; but yours is the first kindness that has ever fallen on my heart in this world."

Forgive them, if for a moment they did as children and women do.

"I have been a bad man, Captain—bad to myself. But, Captain, I want to be a good man now—like you, like you. Oh, help me! for you have saved my body and my soul."

The captain was so much moved he could hardly speak. He was glad there was no one by. He took the poor fellow's hand, and said:

"I am glad to hear you say what you do, Jack. I will give you every guide, care and assistance in my power in your new determination, if you will only come to my cabin and repeat it when you are well."

"May I come, sir? May I consider this an order to come?"

"Yes, Jack. Report yourself to me in person as soon as you are able; and I shall tell the doctor of the order. Get well as quick as you can."

All this day the wind was fair and plenty of it, and she bowled off her ten or eleven knots. The fog was thickening. She was running in over the banks of Newfoundland.

The captain is happy as he is happy who has done a good action. The crew are happy, for they are commanded by a brave, a patient and a humane man. And they don't swear, because their captain does not like it, though some have a higher motive.

And for three years she keeps up the name of the Happy Ship—*the Pet of the Squadron.*

SETH LUCKET'S COURTING.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"Miss Katie, will you marry me?"

Never was there a more surprised girl in the world, and a very indignant one too, than pretty Katie Cummings, when Seth Lucket came to her, and with as much coolness and composure as though she had given him reason to believe such a question would be agreeable to her, asked her to marry him.

"Seth Lucket, what do you mean?" she said.

"Just what I say, Miss Katie."

"I have never given you cause to believe for a moment I would—"

"No; not to *believe*, Miss Katie, but certainly to *hope* so. You have always been kind to me, and— Well, I don't know how to do this thing of courting just as it should be, may be. It's a new thing to me. But I will just tell you how I feel. You've been always kind to me, and I've grown to think a great deal of you; and if you can love me, why, there's nothing on earth that is right but what I'll do for you. I don't drink, chew, nor smoke. I'm not fond of card playing, nor given to profane language. There is not much bad in me. Will you have me?"

"Not much good either. Thank you. No, I will not," Katie answered, her indignation a little mollified by Seth's earnest, respectful manner.

"No? Well, may be not. But I would have tried to grow better for your sake. I'm sorry—a little disappointed. But it won't hurt bad, nor very long. I'm glad I spoke, and found out before it grew any worse with me. There is nothing like taking a thing in time. Perhaps I can find some one else who will take me. It won't make much difference in the end. All young girls are lovely to me, all women good. And I'm sure to love any one who loves me. Don't feel bad about it, Miss Katie. I don't blame you for what you can't help. Good-evening."

And Seth moved away, whistling

"Coming through the rye."

And Katie exclaimed:

"Well, I declare he *is* an original. I'll wager something pretty he will court every girl in this village before six months have passed! Let me count how many. May Garner, Gertie Ashley, Fannie Bartlett, Georgie and Ada Campbell—I believe that's all, old enough for him to court during that time—with myself, six. One a month. Oh, I forgot. May be it is possible he might ask Louise Gaines—hardly. She is a little too old for him. Let me see. He is thirty, she thirty-two, although she does not look it. If he had wanted her he would have asked her first, because he always has waited on her since he first called himself a man. I wonder what has come over the fellow, just to think of going a courting?"

Seth was a really good young man. No one in the village could say a word against his moral character. His want of energy was all his friends could complain of. He owned a little bit of a place, and managed to work it just enough to make a crop sufficient to keep him in clothes and enough to eat. But all he had he was always ready to give away, to any one more needy; generous to a fault. Folks said he would give his head away if he could.

Well, to the villagers' surprise, Seth was trying then to give his heart away.

"I must get a wife to take care of me and what I've got," said Seth.

He was just a little disappointed when the prettiest girl in the village refused him. But as he had said, he could love any one who would love him. He possessed the greatest respect for all women. The memory of his mother, whom he really worshipped, made him do it "for mother's sake," he said.

It seemed rather presumptuous for Seth, with such a meagre amount of the world's possessions, to think of the girls mentioned. But nevertheless he did; and in three months more had been refused by the Campbell girls and May Garner. At first the girls each kept their secret; but it leaked out, and a merry time they had. Not one of them could flatter herself, though, that he was wounded much by *her* loss.

Seth possessed a good deal of quiet humor, and was pretty good company; always ready to be of any service he could to the girls. So, although they laughed at and snubbed him sometimes, they always made it right by doing better the next time they met him.

One day Seth left the village and went to the city; when, after staying four or five days, he returned, saying he had been having his wedding suit made. This he told Fannie Bartlett, who asked:

"Why, who on earth is going to have *you*, Seth? Excuse me—I mean, who are you going to marry?"

"I'm not quite certain *yet*; but somebody *sure*. And I thought it as well to have my suit ready, while I had the money to pay for it too," answered Seth.

And Fannie, trying to keep back her laughter, brought the tears into her eyes, which perhaps Seth misunderstood, for he said:

"Don't cry, Fannie; there is a chance for you yet. But I won't ask you until I do the right thing first. Here—look at this! It is the picture of a nice young man who wants me to tell you he has seen you, and sets a lot of store by you. And if you'll have him, you won't regret it."

Fannie took the picture and looked at it, Seth eagerly watching her countenance, which expressed a good deal of perplexity.

"I've seen this young man somewhere; but, to save me, I cannot tell where," said Fannie.

"I think you have," answered Seth.

"But where? Tell me, Seth." She looked beseechingly into Seth's face. "Why, Seth Lucket, this an't you? I do believe— No. I declare it *is*—and it is *not*. Why, this is an elegant looking man, and *you*—"

"That's so, Fannie; but to relieve your perplexity, I'll tell you, and save you the trouble of telling me how I look. That's the way I intend to look when I am in my wedding suit, and when there is a Mrs. Lucket for me to look well to please. Don't you understand? Now I'll tell you how I got it done so. I went first and set for my picture at the photograph gallery; then I took it to a lady who has the most wonderful talent, folks say, and I know it myself now. I told her to fix me up, not as I *was*, but as I *ought* to be, to please my lady-love, in the style—hair and dress, whiskers and mustache. So she has done it well. Will you have the picture *now*, and me afterward as soon as you please?"

"No, indeed; for I truly believe, Seth, you are crazy, and will end your days in the lunatic asylum."

"All right, Fannie; I'm a *little* sorry. You might do worse. And if you won't have me, somebody else may," said Seth; and he went his way, smiling gently, and thinking, why could not the girls take a liking to him?

One more remained of the real young girls, and in due time Seth presented himself to her. This was Gertie Ashley—not near as pretty as some of the others, but a sweet, sensible girl, who, when Seth asked her to have him, said:

"You are too late, Seth. Somebody else thinks more of me than you do, I know; for he has asked me during the time you have been asking so many. Possibly, if you had come six months ago, I might have said Yes. But I'm much obliged to you, Seth, and I think, with you, some of these girls may go further and fare worse. I know you will make a good husband, and I know somebody who would make you a good wife; but from a rumor I heard this morning, I fear you will be too late there too. They say Parson Smiley is after Louise."

"What!" exclaimed Seth, starting up. "How dare he come after her? I'll make him *smile* on the wrong side of his mouth. *He* marry Louise! or any other man get her! Not while I'm about."

"Why, Seth, what do you mean? She does not belong to you or any one else, poor girl. She is alone in the world now—"

"Yes, she does. No, she an't either. Where am I? Haven't I been waiting on her for years? Although I never thought of marrying her myself, I never thought of any one else doing so. I've always intended Louise should be with me when I have a nice home and a wife. Parson Smiley have Louise! No, I vow he shall not!" Seth said, every moment waxing warmer. And seizing his hat, he darted out, without saying "good-bye."

A moment, and he was back again, saying:

"Excuse me, Gertie: good-bye. And I'm much obliged to you for what you've said. You are the best friend I've got, and I will never forget that *you* brought me to my senses."

Right to Louise's home he went. She had recently lost her mother. When coming to offer consolation, Parson Smiley had learned how good and lovely she was.

Seth found the parson there. They sat quite sociably until nine o'clock. Then the parson looked at his watch, then at Seth, and sat on. Half-past nine, and the reverend gentleman grew restless; looked again at his watch, again at Seth. And still Seth sat. Ten o'clock, and another look at the great silver time-keeper, with an exclamation about "not dreaming it was so late."

Another half hour, and they both sat—not on a bed of roses, I'm sure. The parson made a move as if to go. But Seth moved not, unless to fix himself firmer in the great arm-chair. Louise tried to be agreeable and entertaining, but she was very tired, and wondered why they both did not go, and more particularly what kept Seth.

The parson, finding his rival did not second his movement, had relapsed again to quietness for a time. Then in desperation he said:

"It surely cannot be eleven o'clock. I must be fast. Have you the time, Mr. Lucket?"

"No, sir. If I had, it would be sure to be *slow*, and like me, never in a hurry," answered Seth, going deeper down and further back in his chair.

With a look that ought to have moved Seth, the parson said:

"So I see, sir. Good-night."

Louise accompanied him to the passage, holding the lamp for him to get his coat and hat. And Seth heard him say:

"I will call to-morrow afternoon, if you are not engaged."

And Louise answered:

"I shall be at home."

"Curse him, I was going to say," Seth muttered.

He was looking cross enough, when Louise came in and asked:

"Now what is it, Seth? Something wrong with you? Has Gertie Ashley refused you?"

"Yes, and I am glad she did. She's a splendid girl. But do you think I care if the girls, every one of them except *you*, refuse me?"

"Oh, Seth, Seth! now you are too bad. You have courted every girl in the village, and in desperation come to the old maid at last—"

"Stop, Louise! You know I've been waiting on you for ten years. And *I* know that it is because I have liked you better than all others, that their refusals never hurt me. Now this evening Gertie told me about the parson, and it was that which brought me to my senses. I never dreamed or intended you to marry any one. And now I declare, if you don't have me, I'll do something desperate. I always thought of you as belonging to me in some way. So you have got to take *me* or no one."

"Seth, look at me," said Louise gravely.

Seth did, and she saw he was really in earnest. She continued:

"Parson Smiley will ask me to be his wife to-morrow—"

"I'll choke him, so he can't," interrupted Seth.

"Hush, Seth. Of course I do not love him; but he is kind and good; and I am lonely, and with few friends, if any."

"I'm worth a dozen, if you only would believe it."

"Yes, Seth. But I saw you were determined to find some one else to love, so I have tried to think of you as belonging to any one but me; and so I thought I might be at least peaceful and contented in the parsonage."

"Now, Louise, let us settle this matter for ever. I *like* you. If I find I'm safe in doing so, I'll *love* you; and when I love, it is in truth. I've never yet told any girl I loved her, and they will tell you so. Now, will you take me? Marry me to-morrow?"

"Oh, not to-morrow, Seth. Indeed I cannot. But sometime I will, if you wish," Louise said quietly.

And Seth, kissing her, drew her down beside him, and said:

"I declare I never knew how pretty you were before. Now I won't try to tell you how thankful I am for your promise; but I'll tell you just why I want this matter fixed up to-morrow."

Seth told his reasons, and Louise's brown eyes grew larger, and looked as a child's when hearing a wonderful fairy story. When he had finished, he asked:

"Now will you have me to-morrow, Louise; or shall I leave you?"

"I will go with you, Seth," Louise said.

The next day Parson Smiley received a note from her, saying she would not be home as she had promised. She was then about leaving the village, to be absent for some time.

The parson could not understand what it meant until Gertie Ashley, who, with her betrothed, William Lawton, a young lawyer, having accompanied Seth and Louise to town, returned and announced the marriage.

The surprise of the parson, and the villagers generally, may be imagined, but where Seth got money enough to get married on was a mystery. He had told several that he had gotten his wedding suit ready, and that was all they knew about it. Some declared they were travelling on the little bit of fortune Louise's mother left her—about two hundred dollars. If William Lawton knew more about it he said nothing, until one day, about a week after, the young lawyer displayed a letter he had just taken from the office, from Seth Lucket, written on the eve of his departure for Europe, to settle up the estate of an old uncle, who had left him "a little remembrance," Seth wrote.

A year after, Seth came again among them, looking, as he told Fannie Bartlett he was going to, when he had a wife to look well for—as elegant a young man as the picture he showed her. Louise's travel had wonderfully improved her, and no one for a moment doubted her being very happy, notwithstanding she knew her husband had asked six girls before her. Gertie Ashley was on the eve of her wedding. Seth and Louise insisted they should come to their home in the city, and extended the invitation to the five other girls, offering such inducements that they all gladly accepted. None of them had ever beheld such a magnificent establishment as Louise presided over; and each one but Gertie, I truly think, would have been better pleased if Louise had not looked quite so healthy and strong: no prospect in view of Seth ever being in the matrimonial market again. Oh, if it should be, I am sure never would be heard again the question, "Who would have Seth Lucket?" The "little remembrance" proved to be more than a million of dollars.

Fretting.—This is a very profitless habit. A smile is a better antidote to cure than a snarl. The Psalmist says, "Fret not thyself," and it is golden advice for every one.

THE RUINED WELL.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

Though mouldered and ruined by long disuse,
Still, as of old, it stands grim warden,
With its quaint peaked roof, now shattered and loose,
O'er weed-grown walks and neglected garden.

The roller is sunken and warped with time,
The rotted rope that clings to it broken,
And the hoopless well bucket, dark with rime,
Sprawls near, a sad and mournful token.

Rank growths have invaded the rocky brink,
Far down in the depths their dank roots thrusting;
Gone the wooden spout where we bent to drink;
The iron cup on its chain hangs rusting.

The farm-house itself has gone to decay;
A newer one stands on the knoll beyond it,
With a new well, painted in colors gay,
Near the trim flower-beds that flaunt around it.

But well I remember the days now sere,
The old midsummers, bright and burning,
When the wheezy crank of this old well here
Seemed never at rest, but always turning.

The farm-house then was a living thing,
And though lone and remote, was none the duller,
For the voices of youth made the old walls ring,
And the garden was riant with perfume and color.

And oft did we wind the old bucket up,
Dripping and splashing, with boyish fooling,
And then laughingly fight for the iron cup,
Or bend hot heads 'neath the waters cooling.

And now, though mouldered by long disuse,
It is pleasant to see it still stand warden,
With its quaint peaked roof, all shattered and loose,
O'er its weed-grown walks and neglected garden.

◆

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHERE NEVA'S TRAVELS ENDED.

Neva Wynde sat until a late hour upon the deck, watching the play of the moonlight on the waters, the leaping white crests of the waves, and the white furrow plowed by the *Arrow* as she sped onward over the waters on her way to the northward.

The prophetic gloom settled down yet more darkly upon the young girl's soul. A bitter, homesick yearning filled her heart—a yearning for her father's love to shield her, her father's arm to lean upon, and her father's wisdom to counsel her.

Ah, could she but have known that far away upon other seas, but under starlit skies, and speeding as fast as steam and wind could bear him, her father whom she so mourned as dead—her father was hurrying toward his home, with the same homesick longing in his breast, the same yearning to clasp her in his arms, together with the false wife he so idolized!

And could that false wife have but guessed the truth, as she paced the yacht's deck arm in arm with her husband, conspiring against the peace and happiness of Neva, much of grief and terror that was lying in wait for the Baronet's daughter, and much of guilt and wickedness that the two conspirators were planning, might have been avoided. But neither knew nor guessed the truth, and long before Sir Harold could arrive in England, Neva's fate was likely to be decided by herself or her enemies.

At a late hour the young heiress went to her state-room, Mrs. Craven Black bidding her a careless good-night as she passed. Mrs. Black's French maid Celeste was in the cabin, yawning and out of temper, and she accompanied Neva to her room and assisted her to disrobe. Neva soon dismissed her, finished her night toilet, and knelt to pray by her small port window, through which she could see the dusky azure sky gemmed with stars, and the white waves glorified by the shimmering, pale moonlight.

Neva crept into her narrow berth, leaving her lantern on the wall burning. She could not sleep. A feverish unrest was upon her. The first shadow of distrust of Octavia Black had flung its gloom across her pathway. Until this night she had been full of innocent, child-like faith in the woman her father had deemed as pure as an angel. Sir Harold's praises of his second wife had been received by Neva without allowance, and without suspicion that he might be deceived. She had an implicit reliance upon his judgment, but now she questioned, with a terrible pang, if he had not been deceived.

"I cannot believe Mrs. Black when she says that papa was determined to marry me to a man of whom my father knew nothing, save that he had committed a noble deed upon impulse. And when I refused to believe the story, there was a look on Mrs. Black's face I have never before seen there, a look as of convicted treachery and falsehood. I distrust her—I almost fear her! I am sorry I came with her. And if it be true that she is false and treacherous, I am reconciled at last to papa's horrible death. He could never have borne the knowledge of her real character!"

She sighed, and turned restlessly on her pillow.

"I believe Craven Black to be a villain," her thoughts ran presently. "He made love to me when he was already engaged to marry my father's widow. I am sure he hates me now. Perhaps he has perverted her mind against me? Perhaps she never liked me? I was never allowed to come back to my own home after she entered it, not even when dear papa died, and my heart seemed breaking, until Madame Dalant wrote that my school-days should terminate, and that I ought to be allowed to enter society. Mrs. Black has a caressing manner toward me, and flatters me, but I am sure she does not love me. Perhaps the two are my enemies? If so, how completely I am in their power, having even left my faithful maid behind me, at Mrs. Black's request. I fear I have been blind—blind!"

Poor Neva was now thoroughly alarmed. She remembered a score of incidents, scarcely noticed at the time, that went far to confirm the truth of her sudden suspicion that Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black were her enemies, and that they were conspiring against her. She struggled with her conviction, calling herself foolish, romantic and ungrateful, but the conviction remained.

The fact that the yacht had been engaged for the voyage to Yorkshire, when she had expected to go by train, and that she had not been told of the proposed route until her arrival in London, recurred to her unpleasantly, and as something of sinister moment.

The fact also, that Mrs. Craven Black had a keen personal interest in Neva's marriage to Rufus Black, now for the first time obtruded itself upon the young girl.

"Rufus is Craven Black's son," she said to herself, "and if I were married to Rufus, Craven Black would probably assume control of all my property. I acquit Rufus of any share in the conspiracy, but he is so weak of will that he would not dare to resist his father, who could appropriate half my income to his own use. Can this be Craven Black's design? Can Craven Black have forged that last letter purporting to come from papa? And does Octavia know his designs, and willingly aid him to carry them out? I must study them closely, without seeming to do so. I must be on my guard."

With thoughts like these, Neva tossed upon her pillow for hours, until long after Craven Black and his bride had retired to their state-room, and silence had fallen upon the cabin, and the creaking of a block, or the rattling of cordage, or a voice or footstep on the little deck, sounded through the night with startling loudness, and as something new and strange.

At last she fell asleep, but her slumber was not refreshing, and she was looking very pale and worn when, after a careful toilet in the morning, she came out into the cabin.

The breakfast was spread upon the table, and Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black were seated upon a divan, conversing in whispers. They started guiltily at Neva's appearance, and Mrs. Black cried out gayly:

"Good-morning, my dear. You are a laggard this morning. It is ten o'clock, and I have already taken a constitutional on deck. It's a fine, bracing air."

"I hope I have not kept you waiting," said Neva courteously.

"Did you think us barbarous enough to eat our breakfast before your coming?" cried Craven Black, with exaggerated courtesy. "Sorry not to see you looking better. Did you pass a pleasant night?"

"I did not sleep very well," answered Neva quietly.

She took her place at the table, and Craven Black waited upon her and his wife with careful attention. The breakfast consisted of stewed chicken, coffee, bread, fancy biscuits, and delicate fruits, including oranges, grapes, and peaches, and Neva brought to the meal an appetite sharpened by the sea air.

"I suppose we shall sleep at Wynde Heights to-night?" said Neva, forcing a cheerfulness she did not feel. "We must reach Yorkshire at our present rate of sailing long before evening. Do you purpose landing at Scarborough, or Whitby, or Stockton, Mr. Black?" she asked. "All three are railway stations, and we can go on to the Heights without delay."

The husband and wife exchanged significant glances.

"Neva, dear," said Mrs. Black caressingly, "would you care if we do not go to Wynde Heights? You know the place so little, and have no acquaintances in the neighborhood; and I have none, and I dread a visit to the Yorkshire dower house as something dull and stupid beyond comparison."

Neva looked at the speaker with startled eyes.

"Are we not on our way to Wynde Heights, Mrs. Black?" she demanded, in surprise.

"Yes, dear, if you insist upon adhering to the strict letter of our original plan," answered Mrs. Black. "But I am sure you will not be so hard-hearted and cruel. I no longer want to go to Wynde Heights, and Craven thinks a stay there would be a bore; but of course, if you insist upon it, we will sacrifice our own pleasure to yours."

Neva struggled with her bewilderment.

"I supposed we were on our way to Wynde Heights," she said; "but do not suppose I desire to go there, if you prefer to go elsewhere. It is your wish and pleasure, Mrs. Black, that must be consulted. Would you prefer a watering place, or a visit to the German coast?"

"Neither," said Mrs. Black. "I am so relieved, dear Neva, for I feared you would oppose my wishes, and I think if a woman ought ever to have her own way, it should be on her bridal tour. Craven has been telling me of the only piece of property he owns in the world, a worthless old Highland estate, valueless except for the shooting, with a dear old tumble-down house which no one will rent, and I fairly long to see it. It's quite natural, I think, for a bride to desire to visit her husband's property, and this came to Craven through his Scottish ancestors, the Macdonalds, and it has a host of curious legends and ghost stories, and such a charming, romantic name—Wilderness—that I am impatient to go there; and Craven says, if you do not object, we will go on to Wilderness."

"Where is this place?" asked Neva.

"In Ross shire. There are post-offices convenient, so that you can write back daily, if you like."

"But our coming will be unexpected," objected Neva. "The servants at Wynde Heights are prepared for our coming, but no one will look for us at Wilderness."

"There is an old couple residing there," said Craven Black, "and everything will be done to make our stay pleasant at my old 'Castle Rackrent.' I confess I should like to take my bride to the old place—it is years since I was there—and a week could be very pleasantly passed in mountain excursions, rows on the loch, and rides to the village. Can I say nothing to melt the stern resolution I see expressed in your face, Miss Neva?"

"September seems late for the Highlands," said Neva.

"But this is exceptionally lovely weather," urged Mrs. Black. "And we only want to stay there a week. I see you mean to destroy all our pleasure, Neva, and condemn us to follow your lead."

"You are mistaken," said Neva gravely. "I have no desire to urge my own wishes in the matter. This project of visiting the Highlands takes me by surprise, but I have nothing to urge against it. I wish, however," she added, coloring, "that you would land me at some convenient point on the coast, and permit me to return to Hawkhurst—"

"What! Alone and unattended?" cried Mrs. Black. "You wish to desert us, when I count upon your companionship and society? If you insist upon returning to Hawkhurst, Neva, of course you can go, and we will go with you. But this selfish tyranny—forgive me—is not like your generous self. I would not have believed you so ungracious. My pleasure is quite spoiled. Craven, dear, let us turn back to London."

Mr. Black arose to go on deck.

Neva detained him by a gesture, her proud face flushing.

"You need not turn back upon my account," she said half haughtily. "I will accompany Mrs. Black to the Wilderness. I have no wish to appear ungracious, but you will remember that my friends do not know where I am, and may be anxious about me."

"Oh, Neva!" cried Mrs. Black reproachfully. "Are we not your best friends? But I am too happy in your concession to find fault with your phraseology. Craven, we will go to your dear old Wilderness, and if I like it, I'll fit it up for a shooting-box, and next year we will come up here the gayest party that ever visited the 'land o' cakes.'"

Neva did not linger in the cabin, but went out on deck, and walked to and fro for exercise, while her eyes scanned the waters and the horizon.

The yacht was far out upon the wide North Sea, or German Ocean, a mere speck in the wild waste of waters. There were sails gleaming in the distance in the clear September sunshine, but no shores were visible. The wind was blowing fair and free, the sky was clear, the air crisp and chilly, but nevertheless agreeable.

Neva walked alone until she grew tired, and then sat down in her folding deck chair and thought until her brain was wearied. Mr. and Mrs. Black joined her, and talked and chatted for some hours. Luncheon was served on the deck, and the afternoon wore on as the morning had done.

Night again settled down upon the sea, so bright with moonlight and starlight that it was not less lovely than the day had been. Neva went to bed early, and slept profoundly, not being even visited by dreams.

The next day passed as the other had done, but the coast was not yet seen. The wind proved variable upon this day, but Craven Black consulted his charts frequently, and talked with the sailors, and Mrs. Black yawned, and declared that a sea voyage was charming, but intolerably dull.

A third night dragged by, and Neva began to be anxious to get into port. She knew that Lord Towyn must be looking for a letter from her, and she desired to inform him of Mrs. Black's change of plan of travel, and of her own whereabouts.

Upon the fourth day after leaving London, the graceful little yacht stood in for the land. Mrs. Black and Neva, as usual, spent the day on deck. About noon the *Arrow* sped into Moray Frith, in the wake of a steamer bound for Inverness and the Caledonian canal, and followed by one or two sailing vessels which were allowed to pass the swifter yacht.

"Do we go into Inverness?" asked Neva, as she looked at the chart which Craven Black was exhibiting to her and his wife.

"No," answered Black. "Look at the chart, Miss Wynde. Do you see those narrow straits that connect Moray Frith with Cromarty Frith? We thread those straits, and a not very pleasant excursion it is either. Once safe in Cromarty Frith, we have plain sailing. I expect to sleep at Wilderness to-night."

The yacht in good time threaded the straits, and came out into the calmer waters of the loch-like Cromarty Frith, sailing up a portion of its distance, and then obeying the skillful hand at the helm, it shot into a deep stream or river, and went on into the very shadow and heart of the wild mountain region.

It seemed to Neva, as she looked around her in wonder, awe and delight, that the chaos of the primeval creation yet reigned here. She saw no villages, no hamlets, no houses, no signs of habitation—nothing but grim mountain peaks and ranges, frowning cliffs, and inaccessible rocks. The very vegetation was sparse and stunted, the few trees wildly clinging to niches in the bare rocks, being dwarfed and sickly. Upon higher peaks in the distance, Neva saw glittering crowns of snow, but nearer all was deadness, desolation, chaos.

"It looks as if this part of the earth had been abandoned by God and shunned by man," she thought. "The utter dreariness is oppressive and terrible."

The *Arrow* felt her way on up the river, the banks growing steeper and narrower, the rocks and cliffs more frowning, and the waters blacker. Mrs. Black began to look nervous, and to express a fear that the vessel would presently be caught in the narrowing throat of rocks, but her husband smiled reassuringly, and a little later the yacht shot into a little placid mountain loch, shut in by towering mountains, the waters looking black with the everlasting shadows of the hills bending above them.

Both the ladies breathed freer at this unlooked for termination to their voyage. Half way up the loch the yacht came to anchor, and a boat was lowered to convey the passengers ashore.

"But, Craven," said Mrs. Black wonderingly, "I see no house."

"Look half way up the mountain side," said her husband, pointing with his finger. "Do you see that broad ledge set thick with black looking trees, firs, larches and mountain pines? Back of the ledge, at a distance of half a mile, rises the high mountain peak. Well, on that wild looking ledge, perched in mid-air, as one might say, an outlaw ancestor of mine who fought on the losing side in one of the Scottish wars, and was compelled to flee for his life, built an outlaw's den, in which he spent his last years and finally died. The house has since been improved and enlarged—"

"But, my dear Craven," interrupted Octavia, "the Wilderness cannot be upon that ledge, up this steep pile of rocks. Why, the ledge is inaccessible, unless to yonder eagle. We cannot get up there without wings."

"You comprehend why I could never let nor sell the place," said Craven Black. "But we can get up the cliff. There is a narrow footpath, not especially dangerous, but rather fatiguing. The men will bring up the luggage, and we will walk up. The boat is ready. Come."

He assisted his wife into the boat, and then Neva. The maid came next. Dressing bags followed. Mr. Black sprang in, and two of the sailors pulled lustily for the shore.

The passengers were landed at a projecting rock at the water's edge, and Craven Black, ordering the seamen to remain where they were until he should send a servant to them, conducted his wife, Neva and the maid, by a narrow, steep and tortuous path, up the precipitous face of the cliff. The dreary night fell before they had gained the ledge, but the soft moonlight flecked their path with gleams of brightness, and at last they stood upon the ledge, high up among the mountains, with the loch lying like a tarnished jewel far below at their feet.

"We are buried alive here, mon Dieu!" gasped the little French woman, staring around her. "We are in a tomb!"

Neva's heart echoed the words.

The wide plateau, with its thickly growing trees on every side, looked very grim in the moonlight, obscured as that light was by the towering, frowning mountains. In the midst of the plateau stood an old stone house, long and low, and hideously ugly in its proportions, having a frowning and grim appearance well in keeping with its surroundings.

The front door of this house was open, and lights gleamed from the windows, and forms were seen hovering near the dwelling in watchful expectation.

"It looks as if we were expected!" said Neva, in surprise. "The house is not closed, as you said, Mr. Black."

Octavia Black laughed with a strange, mocking cadence that struck a chill to Neva's heart.

"Give Neva your arm, my dear," she said gayly. "What an idea of yours that we are expected, Neva! Why, we only decided to come while we were on the sea. I am nearly famished, and hope some one will prepare supper for us and give us something better than oatmeal."

As the new-comers drew near the house, the forms Neva had seen disappeared. The travellers ascended the single step to the low broad porch, and entered the wide hall of the dwelling. This hall was lighted by a lantern suspended from the ceiling, and had a stone floor, a stone staircase, and doors upon each side opening into the living rooms of the house.

The travellers halted in the midst of the hall, and at the same moment the parlor door opened, and a woman came out with smiles of welcome—a woman clad in bright-colored garments, but with ash-colored hair and complexion.

This woman was Mrs. Artress!

Neva recognized her with a sudden horror. She knew in that instant that her visit to the Wilderness had been pre-arranged by her enemies—that her wildest suspicions of the falseness and perfidy of Octavia Black had fallen short of the truth—that she had been snared in a trap—that she was a prisoner!

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW LALLY TOOK HER DEPARTURE.

The composed and defiant announcement by Mrs. Wroat that she had adopted Lally Bird as her daughter and heiress, was like a bombshell flung into the enemy's camp. Mrs. Blight stood as if turning to stone, in an utter panic, her eyes glaring upon Mrs. Wroat and upon Lally alternately, her chest heaving, her face livid. All her fine schemes of future grandeur became in an instant "airy visions, fading into nothingness." She beheld herself and her family upon the brink of insolvency, which this old lady's fortune might have averted. She was convulsed with rage and amazement, and with bitter hatred of her young governess.

What she might have done or said cannot be known, for Peters, desiring to spare her aged mistress a scene and expected reproaches, pushed the bank-notes she held into Mrs. Blight's hand, and taking her by the arm, gently forced her out into the hall and closed the door upon her.

This last indignity was too much for the disappointed woman. With a wild shriek, she fled precipitately down the stairs, and burst into the drawing-room and into her husband's presence like an incarnate whirlwind. And here flinging herself into a chair, she gave way to a burst of hysterics as violent as terrifying.

The first act of Mr. Blight was to deluge his wife with the contents of a carafe of water which happened to be at hand. Then, bending over her and chafing her hands, he adjured her to tell him what was the matter, and if the children were all killed.

"You—you beast!" gasped the wife, with the tones and breathing of a drowning woman. "You've ruined my new dress, and it cost fifteen shillings a yard, if it cost a penny! The dear knows where I am to get another. I expect to find myself in the union by this time next year, on account of that treacherous viper that I warmed in my bosom! Oh, my poor children—my poor ruined lambs!"

"What do you mean, Laura?" demanded her husband impatiently. "Don't be a fool, if you can help it, for once. What has happened?"

"Everything has happened!" wailed Mrs. Blight. "We are wretched, good-for-nothing beggars. The old wretch up stairs has gone and left all her money to that jade of a governess—"

"Speak sense, if you can. What do you mean, I ask again? How can Aunt Wroat have 'gone and left all her money' to Miss Bird? Is your mind wandering?"

"No, I wish it was. I'd rather be a wild maniac of Bedlam than what I am at this moment," moaned the unhappy lawyer's wife. "My governess, Miss Bird, you know, is hobnobbing with Aunt Wroat; and who do you think the artful minx has turned out to be? Why, she says she's the daughter of Clara Percy, who married a corn-chandler—the very girl that Aunt Wroat has been looking for for over a year. And Aunt Wroat has adopted her, and says the girl is to inherit every penny of her fifty thousand pounds, except money enough to buy you and me each a penny whistle, or some such thing. And the girl is to have all of Aunt Wroat's splendid diamonds. O dear! O dear! What is life but a trial? Why was I born?"

"But this is infamous!" gasped the lawyer. "It's preposterous. The girl's an impostor. Why didn't you tell Aunt Wroat so?"

"I did—I did. But she sneered at me—she did, indeed. And here is the five pounds I advanced the girl, and Aunt Wroat paid it back to me. And here is twenty pounds for the expenses we've been put to on Aunt Wroat's account. They made me take it. But what can pay us for our blighted hopes? The girl ought to be arrested. If I were only a judge I'd send her to Botany Bay!"

"Serves you right for taking the jade in! And so she's the daughter of Clara Percy. I thought her name seemed familiar," said the lawyer. "Aunt Wroat was always uttering that name on her visit to us last year. What fatality!"

"Must we give up in this way?" sobbed Mrs. Blight. "Is there nothing we can do?"

The lawyer paced the floor excitedly, his features working. Suddenly he paused before his wife, and said, in a whisper:

"Are you sure the girl is honest?"

"As sure as that I am—the treacherous cat!"

"Are you sure, Laura, that she hasn't stolen something of yours—a jewel, a bit of lace, or a trinket?"

"Yes, I'm sure," answered the obtuse Mrs. Blight. "She's had no chance to take anything of mine since she came into this house. Ellen's been sewing in my bed-room every day from morning till night."

"Are you sure—"

"You're worse than the solicitor-general in the Tichborne case, with that eternal repetition," snapped Mrs. Blight angrily. "'Would you be surprised to hear?'—'Are you sure?'—I'm not sure of anything, Charles, except that we are lost, ruined, and undone. Yes, I am sure that what you're thinking of can't be done. I won't be dragged into court; I won't swear to a lie, for I'd be sure to be caught. I won't be publicly disgraced in an attempt to ruin the girl. We shouldn't deceive Aunt Wroat, and she'd get a keener lawyer than you are to turn you and me inside out."

"You needn't tell all that to the whole house, servants included," exclaimed Mr. Blight. "Our game is up, unless this girl is got rid of. We can turn her out of the house to-night, and that we will do. But, first of all, we will go up stairs and argue the case with Aunt Wroat."

"I haven't told you all," said Mrs. Blight, still weeping. "Aunt Wroat is not deaf at all, and heard you call her an old cat, and an old nuisance—"

"It was you called her so!"

"It was you! Of course, if we are ruined you'll lay all the blame on me. Men are all alike, from Adam down. It's always the woman did it. The idea of her pretending to be deaf and listening to what we said! It'll do no good to go up stairs to talk with Aunt Wroat, but I'll make a last effort for the sake of my dear children."

The well-mated pair went up to the door of Mrs. Blight's chamber, and knocked loudly for admittance. Peters replied to them through the key-hole:

"My mistress desires to be excused. She can bear no more excitement to-night. Besides, she is occupied with her niece."

The lawyer tried the door fiercely; it was locked. Then he stooped, applying his mouth to the key-hole.

"Tell your mistress," he said, in a sort of roar, "that that girl is an impostor, and no more her niece than she's her grandfather. The girl is deceiving her—"

He paused discomfited as he heard the old lady hobble away into the inner room, followed by Lally.

"You'd better go down stairs," advised Peters, through the medium Mr. Blight had employed. "May be you don't know you are laying yourself liable to a suit for slander."

"We had better go down," said the lawyer. "The servants are collecting on the basement stairs to learn the cause of the hubbub. We'll see Aunt Wroat in the morning, and convince her that she's been taken in by a clever adventuress, but the girl goes to-night."

With this resolve the couple returned to the drawing-room, leaving the door ajar that they might hear Lally's return to her room. They waited hours, but they did not hear it. The servants retired to bed, and the clocks through the house struck twelve, and still Lally did not emerge from Mrs. Wroat's room. The Blights crept up again to their visitor's door, but silence reigned within.

"The old thing has gone to sleep," murmured Mrs. Blight. "I can hear that odious Peters breathing. Perhaps the girl has slipped to her room so silently that we did not hear her."

They stole up to the third floor to see. They found Lally's room empty and dark.

"They've outwitted us," said Mr. Blight, with an oath. "The girl is going to sleep with the old woman to-night. By George, I wish the old creature would die in her sleep. I'd have the girl arrested for her murder. We may as well go to bed, Laura. We must be up early in the morning."

They retired to their room, but we may safely assert that they did not sleep. They lamented the failure of their plans, accused each other of ruining their mutual prospects and the prospects of their children, and arose soon after daybreak, imbittered, angry, and full of rage and bitterness.

About seven o'clock they heard Lally come forth from Mrs. Wroat's chamber and go up to her room. The young governess had slept with her aged kinswoman, and now, by Mrs. Wroat's command, was about to pack her few effects in her box, ready for departure.

Mr. and Mrs. Blight followed Lally to her room, and entered her door without knocking.

The girl was busy, folding her garments, and her round gipsy face was all aglow, her black eyes had in them a look of hopefulness of late a stranger to them, and she was altogether changed from the piteously sorrowful young creature of the day before. Even the love of her eccentric kinswoman had served to kindle the spark of new hopes and new interests in Lally's lonely life. She regarded her visitors with something of surprise, but received them courteously.

"Good-morning, madam; good-morning, sir," she said, bowing. "Will you be seated?"

"Viper! Ingrate!" cried Mrs. Blight theatrically, but with genuine anger. "I warmed you in my bosom, as it were; I fed you at my table; I paid you at the rate of twenty pounds a year; and this is the way you reward me! Serpent! Base serpent!"

"I don't understand you, madam. What is it I have done?"

"Hear her!" cried Mrs. Blight, her hands uplifted, apostrophizing the ceiling. "She asks what she has done!" and the lady's tones grew hysterical. "She has taken the bread from my children's mouths! She has made me a beggar! She has traduced us and lied about us, and now asks us what she has done!"

"Madam," said Lally, her black eyes flashing, "I have not traduced you, nor lied about you."

"You have repeated to Mrs. Wroat my unguarded remarks about her, made to you in confidence."

"Again you are mistaken, madam," said Lally sternly. "I have not repeated those remarks. Mrs. Wroat judged you by words she herself overheard. I have done nothing to injure you, nor is it my fault that my great-aunt has chosen to exalt me at your expense. Believe me, Mrs. Blight, if my aunt had not found me, she would not have left her money to you."

"Your aunt?" cried the lawyer. "Seems to me you are getting along fast, young woman. Your aunt, eh? It is my opinion that you are a clever adventuress, and I deem it my duty to protect my dear aunt from your evil machinations. Put your things into that trunk. Laura, ring the hall bell for Buttons."

Mrs. Blight complied. Buttons made his appearance.

"Take that trunk down to the street, and call a cab," commanded Mr. Blight.

The trunk being locked with a spring catch, Buttons shouldered it and vanished down the stairs.

"Now, Miss," said the lawyer, with vindictive triumph, "you must be off. You cannot be allowed to speak again to the infirm old lady you have persecuted. March down the stairs quietly, or I'll call a policeman and accuse you of stealing."

"Mr. Blight—"

"Not a word, Miss. On with your bonnet and shawl, and depart. One word to arouse Mrs. Wroat, and I'll have you dragged off to jail."

The color went in and out of the girl's cheeks, and she was frightened and confused. Her situation seemed to her indeed terrible. Peters had confided to her during the previous night, while Mrs. Wroat slept, that the old lady, in addition to her pulmonary disease, had an affection of the heart, and her physician had declared that she must not be unnecessarily excited, for excitement might prove dangerous to her. The excitement of finding her great-niece for whom she had so long sought had been almost too much for her, and Lally feared to disturb her further.

"You need not lay your hands upon me, Mr. Blight," said the young girl, drawing herself away from his touch. "I will go from your house, as you command—but don't touch me!"

She hastened down the stairs, followed by her late employers, and paused for a second in the lower hall with her gaze fixed upon Mrs. Wroat's door. But the door did not open, and she went on and came out into the yard. The garden door was open, and a cab stood in front of it, Lally's box already mounted upon its roof.

"Where shall I tell the cabby to go, Miss?" asked the lawyer, ushering Lally into the street, and laying hold of the cab door. "Get in," he added fiercely, in an under tone, "or I'll send for a policeman!"

Lally climbed into the cab, not answering.

"To the railway station," said the lawyer, closing the door softly.

The cab rolled down the street. The Blights, triumphant, reëntered their villa.

"I'll make it right with the old woman," muttered the lawyer, rubbing his hands. "I'll tell her the girl has run off, after acknowledging that she was an impostor, and that her real name is Jones. Come in, Laura. We're not quite ruined yet."

If he was not quite ruined, he was certainly nearer ruin than he thought. Astute as he believed himself, he had not quite understood the young lady with whom he had to deal. Lally had not gone a block down the street, when she lowered the front window of the cab, and quietly touched the driver's arm.

"We'll go back to Sandy Lands," she said, in a tone of command. "I have no money with me."

"Forgot your purse, hey?" said the driver. "All right, Miss."

He turned and drove back.

Lally commanded him to halt in the middle of the road, in full view of the front windows of the villa. The parlor of Mrs. Wroat faced the street. The inside blinds were raised, and Lally gazed up at the windows expectantly.

"Could you throw a pebble to hit those upper windows, driver?" she asked, of the puzzled cabman.

"Doubtful, Miss. Might break the glass, and have a big bill to pay. Is there somebody up stairs there you want to call?"

Lally nodded.

The cabman glanced up and down the street; there was no policeman to be seen; and he then gave utterance to such a yell as brought to the windows not only Mrs. Wroat and Peters, but Mr. and Mrs. Blight at the drawing-room windows.

Mrs. Wroat at the upper window saw Lally, the cab, and the box upon it, and comprehended what had occurred. Peters threw up the sash.

"Wait a minute, cabby," said the old lady, leaning from the window, and speaking shrilly. "There's two more of us, and a parrot and a dog and plenty of luggage. I'll give you double fare, cabby—wait!"

She disappeared, just as the lawyer bounded out of the house to order the cabman away. That worthy, obeying Lally's command, stood his ground, and offered to fight the lawyer if he received "any more of his sarce." Mr. Blight retreated, with his wife, and hurried up to Mrs. Wroat's chambers. He met her hobbling out of her room, leaning upon the arm of the faithful Peters, who was laden with the parrot's cage, the bandbox and umbrella, and was followed by the dog. This latter immediately conceived a desire to nip the lawyer's legs, and Mr. Blight was obliged to keep up a very undignified dance to avoid him, while he addressed the old lady in terms of expostulation and entreaty, heaping vituperations upon Lally.

"Send my trunks down, and be lively," said Mrs. Wroat, paying no heed to his words. "Don't act like a Dancing Jack, or your friends will put you in Bedlam, Blight. Come, Peters. Mr. Blight has kindly ordered a cab for us, and we must be off. If we're lively, we can catch the up express."

She brushed past the Blights, husband and wife, the latter weeping and pleading, and descended into the yard. The cabman was induced to go up after her baggage, the exhibition of a half-crown lending him wonderful strength and alacrity, and the cab was soon piled high with luggage. Mrs. Wroat, Lally and Peters took their places inside, the driver mounted, and just then the Blights, resolved upon a last despairing effort to gain the fleeting fifty thousand pounds, came out to the garden door.

Mrs. Wroat bowed to them mockingly, and said, as she waved her hand, with glowing exultation, her eyes snapping:

"Good-bye, Mr. and Mrs. Blight. My daughter and I will breakfast at the station, and dine at our house in town. My Blighted friends, if you are ever in need, write to my heiress, and I dare say she will send you a half-crown. Driver, to the railway station."

The cab with its occupants rolled away in triumph.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Friendship.—All attachments subside after a time but such as are founded on the solid basis of congenial tastes, dispositions and pursuits. We look back with anguish on many things, but on none with such bitterness of heart as on the unkindness of those who were once kind. Real friendship is no common blessing. Love is but a more agreeable modification of selfishness. When its object ceases to give pleasurable sensations, love takes its rapid flight; but friendship, sublime friendship, outlives deformity, age and disease.

POWER AND LOVE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

The mighty cataracts down the steeps
  Resistlessly are flowing,
Yet round their sides are gentle flowers,
  And o'er them rainbows glowing—
While, for beneficence to lands,
  Below their waters going.

O, mighty Souls whose powers rush
  For good to man forever,
Why should not your grand missions too,
  That from love cannot sever,
Keep all its symbols round and on
  Your Torrents of Will flowing,
With God's own blessing, unto hearts
  Of millions broadly going?

O, let the gentlest flowers smile!
  O, let the rainbows sparkle!
The Sun of Right serene on high,
  And tempest never darkle!
So will your missions all men bless,
  Their vastness never frighten,
But from your waters of White Truth
  All Spirit-gardens brighten.

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LOVE OR MONEY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

There were three Miss Gillets, spinsters, who lived with their Uncle Gillet, a bachelor, in their old stone house at Atwater, and in pointing them out to strangers the Atwaterites were accustomed to remark upon the fact that it was love or money with them, and that a Miss Gillet who married would cease to be her uncle's heiress.

Nobody knew just how much Mr. Gillet was "worth," but that he was uncommonly wealthy was certain. He had no other living relations but these three girls, and his peculiar prejudices rendered it unlikely that he would will his wealth away to any benevolent or public institution whatever. So to whom could he leave the gold that he could not take out of the world with him, unless it were to Georgina, Millicent and Dolly Gillet?

All regularly instituted public charities Mr. Gillet declared were "frauds;" and friends he had none. Averred that friendship was "all humbug." As for marriage, it was, in his opinion, something which all sensible people eschewed.

The fact that in his earliest youth a dear friend had stolen from him the affections of the girl to whom he was betrothed, and eloped with her on the very eve of his wedding-day, was at the bottom of all this. He trusted no one, because the two beings he had once loved and trusted utterly had deceived him.

When his brother and his wife died in one week of a fever, the bachelor uncle had done his best for the young people. He managed their little income, and provided luxuries for them which their means would not have allowed. He educated them, and allowed them a few female friends. But as they grew up, one law was maintained with inviolable rigidity. There was to be no courting and no marrying beneath his roof. Beaux were utterly forbidden, and it was understood in the family that a Miss Gillet who married would be blotted from her uncle's will.

"What infatuation! They'll fight like cats and dogs in a year," he would exclaim when wedding cards were sent to him. "Take warning by this poor couple, who don't know what is before them, girls. Oh, what infatuation!"

And Miss Georgina Gillet would shake her head, and her younger sisters would follow her example, and they would cry in chorus:

"What infatuation!"

They were pretty girls, tall, slender, red-cheeked and blue-eyed; little ears like pearl, little mouths like coral, dainty waists and cunning hands—girls to be loved and married by nature; but there was Uncle Gillet's money. So they grew up and grew older, still single, and not one of them had ever had a thought of marriage in all her life.

There was Oliver Robb, who had followed Georgina about to and from church for a year. I don't think he wanted the heiress, I believe he loved the girl; but what use was it? Georgie had given him a glance or two, and he had found favor in her sight; but he had only a clerk's salary, and it would be so delightful to handle thousands of her own. And Millicent had met Rufus King in the apple orchard once or twice; but Dolly had never had even a passing flirtation—Dolly who was now eighteen, and prettiest of the three.

It was a well-understood matter in the village, as well as in the family, that marrying, a Miss Gillet lost her inheritance. Doctor Rush had heard it, and believed it to be true, when Uncle Gillet, having a touch of rheumatism, sent for him to prescribe. He had always thought the three slender girls, with ripe round cheeks, dappled with peach color, the prettiest things he had ever seen; but when he stood face to face with Dolly, he fell in love with her. He looked after her as she went out of the room, and Uncle Gillet looked at him sharply.

"My niece is a pretty girl," he said. "I see you think so. She's a sensible girl too. They are all sensible girls; they prefer a single life and pecuniary independence to the miseries of marriage."

"By your advice, I believe," said the doctor.

"They consider me a man of experience, and I'm entitled to respect."

"But are you not rather hard, sir?" said the doctor. "A beautiful girl like that—"

"Hard?" cried Uncle Gillet. "What's love worth? It fades in a week, and is stone dead in a year. What do men give their wives but deceit and neglect? Either the wife deceives the husband, or the husband the wife. Better never to love than to see love die. They used to sing a song when I was a boy: 'Love not.'

"'Love not; the thing you love may die:
  Love not; the thing you love may change.'

It's a sensible song, sir. That's a dear little girl. I hope she'll never fling herself into any one's arms, to be dropped when the sweetness has been kissed out. That's a wife's destiny. If she ever does, no money of mine goes into the brute's pockets."

"All the fault is on the man's side?" asked the doctor.

"It's a miserable muddle altogether, this marriage," said Uncle Gillet; "don't talk about it any more."

Dr. Rush did not, at that time; but about dusk next evening, Dolly, crossing the bridge just out of Atwater, paused to look down into the water, and then and there some one came behind her and said:

"Miss Gillet."

She turned, with a start. It was Dr. Rush.

"It is growing so late that I mean to see you home," he said. "I have just left the good uncle; he is better. He will be well in a day or two. He has a strong constitution, and is a man to live to be a hundred years old."

"I'm very glad," said Dolly.

"I think you are seventeen," said the doctor.

"Well," cried Dolly, "ladies don't tell their ages; but I am that, and a year more."

"Your uncle is fifty," said the doctor. "You'll probably be sixty-seven when he leaves you."

"My goodness!" cried Dolly; "how terribly old!"

"You don't really mean to live single all that time?" asked Dr. Rush.

"Of course I do," said Dolly.

"I don't mean to let you," said the doctor. "I'm in love with you. If mortal love has any power, I'm going to call you my wife. Confound the money. I'll give you all you can need, and I'll try to give you all you want. Of course you don't care for me; but I'll make you. Want me to swear it?"

"O Mercy! *no*," said Dolly. "You are very nice, and I'm sure I—but I don't. I can't ever. O Goodness! don't talk so."

"You can't ever like me?" asked the doctor.

"No, I don't mean that," said Dolly. "I can't ever *marry*."

"But you'll take a walk over the bridge to-morrow?" said the doctor.

"Well, perhaps so," said Dolly.

And so she did. She took a great many; and at last, one day Dr. Rush was allowed to slip a ring upon her finger, and to kiss her on her lips.

"I sha'n't have a penny," said Dolly. "You are sure you don't mind?"

"All the pennies we want I can earn myself," said the doctor.

"And Uncle will be so angry!" said Dolly.

"But I am so glad!" said Dr. Rush. "And you must tell the truth at once, and marry me in a month. Promise, Dolly."

Dolly promised.

Georgina and Milly sat at work together that evening, while Uncle Gillet read to them. Dolly was not sewing. She held the work, it is true, but her hand never moved toward the needle. She did not hear a word that was uttered; but when at last there came a pause, she dropped the muslin and started to her feet.

"If you please, Uncle," she said, "there's something I must tell. I can't keep it secret any longer. It isn't a bad thing—it's a good thing; only I knew you'd be angry. I'm going to marry Dr. Rush."

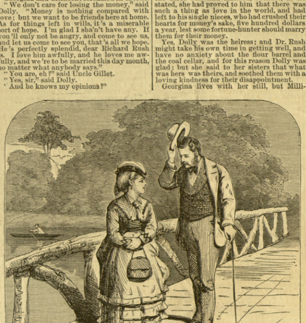
Georgina and Millicent screamed in chorus.

"We don't care for losing the money," said Dolly. "Money is nothing compared with love; but we want to be friends here at home. As for things left in wills, it's a miserable sort of hope. I'm glad I sha'n't have any. If you'll only not be angry, and come to see us, and let us come to see you, that's all we hope. He's perfectly splendid, dear Richard Rush is. I love him awfully, and he loves me awfully, and we're to be married this day month, no matter what anybody says."

"You are, eh?" said Uncle Gillet.

"Yes, sir," said Dolly.

"And he knows my opinions?"



"Of course," said Dolly. "He knows that except the two or three hundred dollars I have for clothes, I'll never have a penny."

"Then make fools of yourselves if you like," said Uncle Gillet.

"You'll come to the wedding, won't you?" asked Dolly.

"No; but I'll let your sisters go," said Uncle Gillet. "I never go to weddings or executions."

So the wedding came off.

Dolly, in white muslin, married her Richard Rush. Georgina and Millicent wept, as custom required, and spoke of their sister as "poor Dolly." They were very kind, as to a beloved, but misguided lunatic, and gave her useful presents, and promised to "do all they could for her."

Dolly did not feel that she needed anything. They seemed poor to her, those heiresses who had no one to love them. She went to her husband's home, and never a cloud came between them, and never a change fell upon their love.

Uncle Gillet never made them a present, but he came to dine sometimes, and always kissed the last baby. As for the Misses Gillet, they had no means at command though they had such fine prospects. Oliver Robb had been dismissed long before by Georgina. She had told him plainly that she could not sacrifice mammon to love. And Millicent had had another meeting with Rufus King in the orchard.

"It's the last time, Milly," Rufus had said. "I can't go on offering myself forever; but I love you better than my life, and always shall."

"I like you, Rufus," said Milly, "and it seems hard; but uncle will not relent. I can't lead a poor woman's life even for you."

"Then good-bye, Milly," said Rufus. "There's no love where money can be set against it."

So they parted. And now Georgina was forty, and Milly thirty-eight, and Dolly thirty-five.

Business was worse with the doctor. A richer practitioner had taken much of his practice.

Dr. Rush trudged over the low country, in all weathers and at all hours; and so one night some ruffian who did not know how empty his wallet was, attacked him in a lonely place, and left him for dead.

A farmer going homeward early carried him home in his wagon, and he was cared for as well as might be; but a broken leg and a dislocated shoulder are no light matters, and Dolly hardly knew what to do or where to turn. She was only sure of one thing, her love for her Richard, which grew greater with every trial.

For the sake of this she put her pride down. And leaving the servant with her husband one day, trudged over to her uncle's house. As she drew near, she reflected on the fact that she was actually in need of charity. It was a bitter thought.

She paused within sight of the house, hardly daring to go on; and as she did so, the door opened and a servant came out, who stooped for a moment and reëntered, and as she closed the door a black streamer flaunted in the air. There was crape on the door. Some one was dead.

Faint with terror, Dolly hurried on. In the hall, her sisters, who had seen her coming, hastened to meet her. Uncle Gillet was dead. He had expired suddenly at the dinner-table, and the ladies were overcome with grief and excitement. But they put their arms about Dolly and promised her to do all they could.

"Just now it isn't much," said Georgina. "But we shall be rich women, and will help you constantly."

"I knew poor Dr. Rush couldn't get on," said Milly. "Poor dear man! He shall see we can be friends; and if you like, we'll take two of the children."

"Never that," said poor Dolly. "Thank you; but they are our jewels."

Georgina sighed.

"Uncle meant kindly," she said. "But it is hard. We're lonely sometimes, Dolly. Milly only meant that."

Then Dolly's heart melted.

"They shall come to see you often," she said.

And she went into the still room and wept over the quiet figure lying there; and went home again with her dole of wine and jelly, and a few dollars.

"We'll be able to do so much more," said Milly, "when the will has been read."

"You've paid dearly for yielding to me, Dolly," said the suffering man, as she ministered to him. "Don't you wish you were still Miss Gillet and an heiress?"

But Dolly said "No" from her heart. Neither did she feel anything but tender sorrow for the prejudiced old man, whom she had been very fond of. "I chose," she said to herself, "and I chose well."

She went to the funeral, Georgina sending her the black dress. And as she sat in the parlor afterward, awaiting the reading of the will, her thoughts wandered back into the past; and the monotonous rendering of the saids and aforesaids made no impression upon her until her own name caught her ear. Then she looked up. Millicent and Georgina were both staring hard at her.

"What is it?" she asked. "I did not hear."

Millicent had covered her face with her kerchief, and was crying. Georgina had flushed red as a peony.

"It means that we've been slaves all these years for nothing," she said. "You are the heiress. What have you been thinking of, that you have not heard?"

What Georgina said was true. Eccentric to the last, Uncle Gillet had left all his fortune to the niece who had married, because, as he stated, she had proved to him that there was such a thing as love in the world, and had left to his single nieces, who had crushed their hearts for money's sake, five hundred dollars a year, lest some fortune-hunter should marry them for their money.

Yes, Dolly was the heiress; and Dr. Rush might take his own time in getting well, and have no anxiety about the flour barrel and the coal cellar, and for this reason Dolly was glad; but she said to her sisters that what was hers was theirs, and soothed them with a loving kindness for their disappointment.

Georgina lives with her still, but Millicent does not. Rufus King heard of what had happened, and came back to Atwater. He had a bald head, and her pink cheeks were gone; but they both remembered the apple orchard, and so there was another wedding. And somebody told me, the other day, that Oliver Robb, having lost his first wife, had been heard to say that Georgina Gillet was the finest looking lady in Atwater, if she was forty. So who knows what may happen yet?

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SCIENCE.

The question why, if men existed in prehistoric times, no human bones are found among or near the skeletons of animals which we know must have lived in ages long before any of which we have other knowledge, is one which Mr. W. L. Pengelly, in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, endeavors to answer by saying that their bones may be more subject to decay than the bones of other animals. And to support this view, he calls attention to the experiments made by Lindley upon plants placed in a tank of water. This distinguished botanist collected one hundred and seventy-seven specimens of plants, comprising representatives of all those which are invariably present in the coal measures, and those which are always absent. For two years these were constantly exposed to the action of the air and the water in the tank. At the end of that time certain kinds had entirely disappeared. These consisted of such as are not found in the coal fossils; while the ferns and coniferous trees, which are so prominent in coal, were well preserved. Mr. Pengelly insists, however, that bones of pre-historic men *have* been found.

Globe lightning is one of the mysteries of meteorological science, which as yet has wholly failed to account for its various phenomena in a satisfactory manner. Its most obvious peculiarities are its globular form, and the slowness of its motion from the clouds to the earth, so that it can easily be followed with the eye. Its occurrence is most frequent in those localities where the danger from ordinary lightning is greatest. It was the belief of Arago—and his belief is shared by many physicists—that a person struck by ordinary lightning never sees the flash. With globe lightning the contrary is thought to be the fact. Solykoff, an engraver, who, with Professor Richmann the physicist, was struck by lightning of this sort in the year 1753, subsequently recovered, though the professor was killed; and he distinctly described the appearance of the thunderbolt as a globular flame. Mr. R. A. Proctor states that it is in the power of the electrician to reproduce all the phenomena presented by lightning, except those exhibited by globe lightning.

Photographs of the great constellations of the Southern hemisphere are to be taken at the Cordova observatory in the Argentine Republic, under the direction of Dr. B. A. Gould, the superintendent. A gentleman experienced in stellar photography, who has studied with Mr. Lewis M. Rutherfurd, the well-known amateur astronomer of this city, has gone out to Buenos Ayres to enter upon the work. In regard to this enterprise Prof. Peirce, of the Coast Survey, says, "The photographs afford just as good an opportunity for new and original investigation of the relative position of the near stars, as would be derived from the stars themselves, as seen through the most powerful telescopes. They are indisputable facts, unbiassed by personal defects of observation, and which convey to all future times the actual places of the stars when the photographs were taken."

If we are to believe the police accounts, the stupefaction of watchmen and others by chloroform, for purposes of burglary and theft, is a common occurrence in our large cities. It is the opinion of high scientific authorities, however, that insensibility cannot be produced by administering chloroform without so arousing the person operated upon, that he will become fully aware of what is being attempted before losing consciousness. This fact disposes of those numerous cases in which it is pretended that night watchmen have been instantly stupefied without knowing how, and that the drug used proved to be chloroform.

The use of the turbine wheel as a propeller for steamships is advocated by Mr. Andrew Murray of the United Service Institution. The turbine is simply a horizontal water-wheel, fed with water from a height, or by means of a pump. In applying it to a ship, the water would have to be let in through apertures in the bottom. Further experiments must be made before any opinion can be formed as to the value of the suggestion.

The British commission sent to this country by the Iron and Steel Institute to examine into the practical merits of American inventions for the mechanical puddling of iron, have reported favorably upon one of the furnaces which they found in operation here, and recommended the construction of a machine of the same kind in England.

Xylonite is the name of a newly discovered preparation chemically allied to gun-cotton, and designed as a substitute for india-rubber in many respects. It is formed by the action of nitric acid on woody fibre. It will make water-proof fabrics, of any color, and can be washed and ironed like ordinary linen or cotton cloth.

The gold which is used to color ruby glass does not combine chemically with the other substances which make up the glass, but is merely dissolved by them. This has been ascertained by a German chemist. The amount of gold required to produce the ruby color is only some ten thousandths parts of the glass.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. M. (——, Mass.) says: "I have long desired to ask your opinion upon an act committed by me some few weeks since, and to-day made up my mind to do so. I was left an orphan at the age of fourteen, and since that time have lived with my dear old grandmother, who has endeavored to be both father and mother to me for the past five years; and what little goodness I may possess I owe to her teachings and example; and in spite of my thoughtless and mischievous pranks I know she loves me, and clings to me now in her old-age and helplessness. Grandma has been quite deaf for two years, and now her eyesight is growing more dim with each passing day, and it is my pleasure to be both ears and eyes for her. And were it not my pleasure it would surely be my duty. About two years since I became acquainted with a gentleman who I thought was 'the soul of honor,' and one I could look up to with respect; and six months later, when I became engaged to him, I thought 'my cup of happiness was filled to the brim.' From our earliest acquaintance he has known how tenderly I regard my grandmother, and often and again heard me assert my fixed determination never to leave her; and he never offered a word of objection. Well, a few evenings ago he said he wanted me to marry him on my birthday—which will be in May—and ere I had time to make any reply he continued, 'I know you have always intended to have your grandma live with you, but I cannot consent to her sharing our home. She is old and infirm, and would get along full as well in some family who, by receiving good pay, would look well to her comfort and well-being, and I'm perfectly willing you should visit her as often as you choose.' Do you wonder that I was for a moment so surprised at his remarks that I could not utter a word? Indignation, disappointment and pride finally came to my assistance, and I told him, then and there, that 'our engagement was at an end, and a marriage between us would never be; that he had revealed more of his character to me in the few moments just past than he had in the eighteen months of our friendship; and further, I would never cast my grandma off for any man, much less for so selfish and heartless a one as he had shown himself to be. And if poor old grandma was infirm, it was more than ever my duty to care for her comfort, and a heaven-sent opportunity for me to repay in part my obligations to her. As to your kind intention of allowing me to visit her when I pleased, I've simply to say, such unheard-of magnanimity I'm afraid I could never have properly appreciated.' And so we two—who had been all in all to each other—parted. And although his friends blame me very much, and call me heartless, still I feel that grandma spoke truly when, after hearing the story, she replied, 'God bless you, deary. You are all I have left in this world, and I don't think you will ever be sorry for having stayed with me what little time I'm here.' Now, Mr. Editor, forgive this intrusion upon your valuable time, and tell me whether you think I did right or not. I've so much confidence in your judgment that I can't feel perfectly satisfied until I have your candid opinion. Please answer at your earliest convenience, and oblige one who has read your paper for five years, and has found in it a valuable friend, and a powerful though silent adviser. Every copy contains something which strongly appeals to and strengthens our finer feelings—makes better men and women of all who carefully read it. Then some incident cutely related 'tickles' us hugely; and if our sense of the ridiculous is keen, we generally end its perusal with an irrepressible ha, ha, ha! For gayety, gravity, sentiment and purity, give me the *New York Ledger*." Morally your course seems to be generous and right. If he had reason to understand that you would abandon one to whom you owe so much, for him, when you engaged to marry him, he has reason to complain. But if all the indications were the other way, he has suffered no wrong. You have dismissed him perhaps a little summarily, however.

S. C. C. (Commercial College of Kentucky University, Lexington, Ky.) says: "Favor me with your decision on the following: A dispute arose between myself and another student of this college, in regard to the grammatical correctness of the sentence, 'To-morrow will be Thursday.' I held this to be correct and proper. He declared that 'To-morrow is Thursday' to be proper, and backed up his argument by saying he had read in your Notices to Correspondents an instance where you had said it was correct. I have been a constant reader of your inestimable paper, and was not so fortunate as to have observed this. Now, if you will decide which one of the two sentences is correct, at your earliest convenience, through the Notices to Correspondents in the *New York Ledger*, you will have confered a favor on, yours truly." We notice, in passing, that "confered" is false in orthography, and that "will have conferred" is doubtful in construction. If the phrase "To-morrow is Thursday" be uttered in view of the almanac, it should escape the notice of the veriest pedant. In the presence of such a gentleman, however, one may say, without impropriety, "To-morrow will be Thursday." There is right of choice between the forms of expression; but there is no authority for writing "declaired." We would not notice these peccadilloes, if you did not write from so distinguished an institution of learning.

Amicus Curiæ says: "A young lady friend sought my advice in reference to a matter which I had rather submit to you, on account of the anxiety with which your answers to correspondents are read, and the satisfaction given to your subscribers. The case is briefly this: The said young lady is partially engaged to a young man whom she ardently loves, and her affection, I have every reason to believe, is ardently reciprocated. The young man is a lawyer, with limited means, but possesses talent and energy. He is sincere in the *suit* he is now prosecuting for her hand, and seems, to use his language, somewhat vexed at the *dilatory pleas* filed by his fair *inamorata*. He is a gentleman of refinement, of moral habits, *except*—and that, she states, is the only ground of *demurrer*—he occasionally "looks upon the wine when red" to an excess. He has, however, promised total abstinence. A *final decision* is to be rendered in the case at the next *hearing*. Would you advise her to *move* for a *continuance*, *confess judgment*, or *dismiss* the *suit* at *plaintiff's cost*?" No: it may be a proper case in which to reserve judgment, taking such time for consideration as to the Court may seem proper. There is sufficient reason here for "the law's delays."

S. G. of P. C. (Westchester county) says: "Will you oblige a reader of your valuable paper with a little advice on the following questions: I am a young man eighteen years of age, and support myself by running a steam-engine in a wood working mill; but I find it is as much as I can do to support myself, as the mill I work in does not have work enough to keep it running more than half the time, and of course, I only get paid for the time I work. Do you think I could do better in New York city at the same work than where I am at the present time? What are the wages paid to men running steam-engines in New York, that is, if they understand their business, and have a license? And what is the cost of a license? Where can I find a good book on engineering, as I like the business, and I want to learn all I can about it?" You had better make a trip to New York in one of your idle periods and inquire for yourself, than rely on the merely general information we could give you. A good Dictionary of Mechanics will probably be the best help you can obtain. It will introduce you to other suitable books.

Boy of Fifteen says: "I wish to ask a question through the columns of your interesting paper, the *Ledger*, and that question is this: What evidence have we that God wrote the Bible, and to whom did he first present it, or did he really write it himself? Now this may seem an absurd question, and look very ignorant in me, but if you will give me a satisfactory answer you will greatly oblige a boy of fifteen years, who is trying to store his mind with useful knowledge." God did not write the Bible; but He aided holy men to do it. We know they had His aid because no other men have ever done anything of the kind. They wrought miracles of power in many instances to confirm their words, and they gave prophecies which are miracles of knowledge that are being fulfilled now, though written thousands of years ago. We find no fault with you. Get into a Bible class, and find a good book on "the evidences of Christianity," and above all study the Bible for yourself.

A. H. M. (Connersville, Ind.) says: "When a lady and gentleman are out calling, or at any place of amusement, which one should propose going home? I am aware that 'circumstances alter cases,' but yet I am unable to decide which is proper. And do you think it according to the rules of propriety for a lady to invite a gentleman of slight acquaintance to call upon her? Please answer the above, and you will greatly oblige one whose best wishes ever attend you." It is the privilege of the lady to indicate the time for departure. A lady may give to a gentleman *properly introduced*, such an invitation; it will generally be framed in such a way as to be simply equivalent to "I shall be happy to see you."

De Villeroy (Jamestown, N. Y.) says: "Can you inform me of the average number of words used by the common railroad and canal laborer; also, the average number used by the educated and cultivated American, and the number of different words in Shakespeare?" On these points the most that could be given would be a guess, and any guessing we have seen has been unsatisfactory. It is impossible to give an average, or an approach to accuracy, for lone "words" is an ambiguous description, some understanding by it, roots only, and some including all the forms and inflections. Webster, who does not include participles, participial adjectives and verbal nouns, gives "an aggregate of 114,000 words."

Shakespeare (Phalaga, N. J.) says: "Will you please inform me whether there are not two accepted definitions concerning the beginning of Spring? I claim, according to the scientific acceptation, that it begins when the 'sun crosses the equator,' or about the 21st of March. I am disputed positively by a party who says no such idea ever existed with anybody. Please inform me explicitly concerning it." Your statement is scientifically correct, and you, or rather your view, should not be disputed. Of course there are other views of it besides the scientific. Coleridge does not speak astronomically when saying, as he might this year:

"And the Spring comes slowly up this way."

Stonewall Social Club (New Orleans) says: "Will you please inform me, through the columns of your valuable paper, if the phrase, 'I swear,' is profane?" Profaneness consists in the light and irreverent use of words descriptive of solemn and sacred objects. If the phrase in question is so employed, it is profane. Swearing is an appeal to Deity; such an appeal should be only on proper and adequate occasions, and in the solemn spirit of worship—the only spirit in which a creature can properly appeal to the Creator. To avow the act—that is, make the appeal, or allege "I swear," in any other spirit, is profane, though often enough the profanity of the thoughtless.

A. P. X. says: "Can you furnish me with the numbers of the *Ledger* running from July 28th, 1866, to the end of Mrs. Southworth's story, called 'Britomarte, the Man-hater?' I think that there are only about six or seven numbers. And how much will those numbers cost?" We can furnish the numbers of the *Ledger* you refer to. There are seven of them, and the price is forty-two cents.

A Mother (Michigan) says: "I have been accustomed to quote your answers to correspondents as unquestionable authority on every occasion; but lately I was told that I was quite mistaken in supposing that you were always right. To explain myself more clearly: A young friend of mine was expressing some sentiments of infidelity in my presence, and taking great credit to himself for his superior discernment. After some talk with him, I told him that such sentiments were to be deplored rather than to be gloried in, even in a worldly point of view, as they were not looked upon with respect in this Christian country; and to prove my assertion, I referred him to one of your answers in the *Ledger* to something similar. But he insisted that it was only your opinion, and no more certain to be right than the one that differed with you. Do you not, in these matters, also give the public opinion of the wise and good? There is another question which I find it hard for me to decide, and would consider your help a great favor. It is this: I have always worked hard. I have now sufficient property, the interest of which will support me while I live, without any further care or labor on my part. I have two sons, young men, to whom I have given a good education—one has a profession, the other has steady employment. Now if I divide my property with them, to establish them in business, I shall have to labor on for my support, as I have always done; and they may not succeed in business, and may lose what I give them. And if I keep it myself, I shall have something to help them, in case they meet with any misfortune and really need help. On the other hand, as I have poor health, I have no reason to expect to live but a few years, and as my sons are now situated, it may be a number of years before they can accumulate sufficient means to establish themselves respectably in business and get settled in life, for they are too prudent and well-principled to marry when they have nothing to depend on but their daily earnings. Now if I divide what I have with them, I shall see them happily settled in life, and live to see them enjoy what I have to give them, and not feel that they would be consoled at my death by the thought of coming in possession of the property I leave them. Please tell me which you think would be the wisest course to take." As to the first point: No one ever found any infidelity countenanced in the pages of the *Ledger*, and our opinions are formed and stated, not, as may seem to be, in accordance with the prevailing sentiment, but on *appropriate evidence*. A question in history or in mathematics is decided on the best historical or mathematical authority, and a question in morals on the highest moral authority. If public opinion does not agree therewith, why, so much the worse for public opinion. As to the second point, could you not strike out a middle course? At any rate, you are under no obligation to deprive yourself of all to advance your sons, who have already a fair start in life through your industry, and they should not permit it, even if you were willing.

B. H. L. (New York) says: "A dispute having arisen between a friend and myself, we have mutually agreed to abide by your decision, in your answers to correspondents, and trust that you will favor us with as early a notice as you consistently can. The point at issue is this: whether the title of 'Esq.' can properly be used when the party is a junior—as, Richard Roe, Jr., Esq. My friend contends that it cannot; I think to the contrary. He furthermore says that if we wish to give the gentleman addressed a title, and he is a junior, we can only properly say, 'Mr. Richard Roe, Jr.,' and not 'Richard Roe, Jr., Esq.' Any little points in connection with the title of 'Esq.,' if communicated in the answer, would be highly appreciated." According to common usage, as far as we have observed, "Esquire" may be given to any male person, not under conviction for petty larceny. It was originally given to boys over fourteen, and entitled them to wear a sword. Government officers in this country were long supposed to have a special title to it, but it is now employed without any discrimination, and may be given to Richard Roe, Jr., with perfect propriety. It was once descriptive of those who came next in rank to knights, then of younger sons of various great people, and is now applied to almost any man. As a general thing, those who have the strongest claim to titles think the least of them.

Adelaide (De Witt, Iowa) says: "Will you please tell me the meaning of a sentence which appears in Mrs. Lewis' story of 'A Daring Game.' The Hon. Craven Black, in conversation with his son Rufus, says, 'You will never sit upon the woolsack.' What does he mean?" The woolsack is the seat of the Lord Chancellor of England in the House of Lords, and is a large, square bag of wool, without back or arms, covered with red cloth. In familiar conversation in England, the woolsack has come to stand for the Lord Chancellorship itself, just as the White House, in this country, is often used as synonymous with the Presidency. When we say that a man is aiming for the White House, we mean that he wants to be President. So, in England, when they say a man is aiming for the woolsack, they mean that he is ambitious to be Lord Chancellor. When one says of a lawyer in England, that he "will never sit upon the woolsack," he not only means that he will never be Lord Chancellor, but he also means that the person thus spoken of is destitute of superior ability, is a commonplace lawyer, and will never amount to much. It is analogous to the sneering remark that is sometimes used, "He will never set the North River on fire;" or, as the Western people say, "He will never set the Mississippi on fire."

Gullible (Foster, Ky.) says: "In the Cincinnati *Enquirer* of the 13th of March, appears a communication dated 'St. Johns, Feb. 25th,' purporting to have been written by a correspondent of the 'New York *Sun*,' in which the writer says that a disease, supposed to be identical with the leprosy mentioned in Holy Writ, has been 'blasting' the sea-side town of Tracadie for the last century. He says that it is not at all contagious or hereditary. Also, that ex-Governor Hamilton Gordon of New Brunswick attributes it to diet. Now, as I am a firm believer in the wisdom and truth of the 'Notices to Correspondents' found in the *Ledger*, and wish to 'prove all things' and 'hold fast that which is good,' I ask you if leprosy exists at this time in *any* part of the world; and if so, if it has been 'blasting' Tracadie for the last century?" Perhaps we make a confession of culpable ignorance when owning up our non-acquaintance with Tracadie, in which, we hope, none of our readers own real estate. We cannot, therefore, speak of the specific representation. Leprosy, however, is a general name for various forms of disease still prevalent in various parts of the world, and some of them of a very dreadful kind.

S. S. B. says: "I am working in my father's book-bindery, and have for some time been in love with one of the sewing girls in the bindery, who is of good family, but unfortunately her parents are poor. She reciprocates my affection, and I have asked her hand in marriage; but my father says I shall not marry her, for if I do he threatens to turn me out of doors. With your experience in such matters, I know you will give me advice which it will be best for me to follow." If you are a minor, or bound as an apprentice, or dedependent on your father, there is good reason for consideration and delay. If you are of age, and able to support yourself and a family, and no other objection be alleged against the girl than that she works for an honest living in one way, and you in another, in bookbinding, we can see no reason why you should not be *bound together*. At the same time the strong objection of a parent is always a good reason for caution and careful examination of one's course.

W. M. (Virginia) writes: "I have been engaged to a lady three years. I love her devotedly, and she loves me. She is very intelligent, of good character, and industrious; has a mild temper, and I believe we should be happy together. I asked the consent of her parents. They both refused, but did not state their reason. She says she will marry me at any time, as she is twenty-one years old. I am in limited circumstances, but have enough to support us, and have a good occupation by which to gain a respectable living. What I want to know is, would it be necessary to ask them—her parents—again, or to marry her without asking them?" The girl has the *right* to marry without her parents' consent; but it is much better to obtain it if you can. You will probably be able to overcome their objection to the match, which seems to be unreasonable.

Frank L. (Brooklyn) writes: "At present I am working in an office, but I should like to learn a trade. Now what would be a good trade for a boy to learn? I am not very strong, and would not like a trade that would be too rough. My age is fifteen, and I have a fair public-school education. Please also inform me where such trade can be obtained." What trade to select is mostly a matter of taste. Skill in any of the trades is well paid now; and you can learn almost any in Brooklyn, or New York, or Newark, N. J., as well as anywhere. Whatever occupation you select, aim to excel in it. Governor Hoffman said, recently, in a public speech, that he would rather be a good boot-black than a poor governor.

Jennie M. says: "A gentleman of my acquaintance is going away, and he wishes me to correspond with him. How long after I receive the first letter must I answer it? And he being considered a little more than a friend, should I say, 'Truly yours,' or 'Affectionately yours,' or what?" About the best way to sign your letter is the way that Horace Greeley signs his, simply, "*Yours*." That goes for much or little, just as the occasion may seem to require or justify.

G. D. C. (Rolla, Mo.) writes: "There has been a difference among us as to the authenticity of the letters to which you reply. Are they real, or imaginary? Some of us take strong ground that they are real, and others equally positive that they are not. We leave the question until your anxiously awaited reply reaches us." The letters are real and genuine, and we have space to answer only a small part of those that we receive.

J. W. (Waterville) asks: "What is your opinion of the Farm Agencies advertised in different papers? Do you think it would be safe to intrust real estate to them to sell?" Some of them are trustworthy, and some are not. You should not part with the title to your farm without getting your pay for it.

A Country Girl writes: "I claim that it is wrong for a lady to allow a married man to kiss her, although she may think that only friendship prompts him to do so; while my friend thinks it is right and proper for him to do so?" Married men should kiss their wives, and nobody else.

Fred. (Boston, Mass.) writes: "Two readers of your paper would like your opinion upon this question: Has a child whose grandparents died before it was born ever had a grandfather?" It has, when born, a dead grandfather.

A. A. B. (Mayfield, Ky.) says he is very much in love with a young lady, but is too diffident to go to see her. It is leap-year, and if he will send her a copy of the letter which he sends us, perhaps she will call upon him.

Bayou (Louisiana) asks: "Will you please answer a question for an old subscriber? What is F. F. V. an abbreviation of?" The letters F. F. V. are the initials of First Families of Virginia.

C. G. (La Porte) wishes to know, when a lady and gentleman have agreed to correspond, which should write the first letter. The gentleman should.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*